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Aruba TODAY

On Top Of The News Email: news@arubatoday.com website: www.arubatoday.com Tel: +297 582-7800 Thursday, February 5, 2015



SEARCHING FOR CLUES

A police officer looks at an SUV that was crushed at the front of a Metro-North Railroad train Wednesday, Feb. 4, 2015, in Valhalla, N.Y. Five train passengers and the SUV's driver were killed in Tuesday evening's crash, about 20 miles north of New York City. Authorities said the impact was so forceful the electrified third rail came up and pierced the train.

(AP Photo/Mark Lennihan)

Investigation Underway After Deadly Metro-North Crash

**M. SANTORA
M. FLEGENHEIMER
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NEW YORK - As the investigation into the deadliest accident in the history of New York's Metro-North

Railroad got underway Wednesday, officials said they still could not explain how or why a sport-utility vehicle became stranded on the train tracks. A crowded commuter train

traveling north through Westchester County slammed into the SUV on Tuesday night, setting off a devastating explosion and fire that killed six people. Fifteen people were being

treated at local hospitals. State officials, who had said Tuesday that seven people were killed, revised the number Wednesday, saying that six people had died - five train passengers

and the driver of the car, according to Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo's office and the Metropolitan Transportation Authority.

Continued on page 3

French comic on trial for 'defending terrorism'

ELAINE GANLEY
Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — Controversial French comic Dieudonne M'bala M'bala went on

ror spree in Paris.

The comic, known by his stage name Dieudonne, said on Facebook "I feel like Charlie Coulibaly." The

where two gunmen killed 12 people, and that of Amedy Coulibaly, who prosecutors say killed four hostages at a kosher supermarket and

9.

It was the second time in seven days the comic has faced a court. Last week, he faced charges of inciting racial hatred.

In a tough new crackdown on terrorism, France is going after anyone seen as supporting terror in any form. Scores of people have gone before courts for perceived backing of terrorism or the Paris attackers.

The prosecution asked that Dieudonne be fined 150 euros (\$171) per day for 200 days, a total of 30,000 euros. The verdict was set for March 18, a day before the verdict in last week's trial in which the prosecution sought a one-off fine of 30,000 euros.

Dieudonne, 48, has been convicted a dozen times on racism or anti-Semitism charges. Last year, French authorities banned several of his performances, in which he made light of the Holocaust and popularized a gesture some describe as an inverted Nazi salute.

Dieudonne, with an ardent following, claims he's unfairly targeted for what amounts to humor. His lawyer, David De Stefano, said Wednesday that his Facebook post falls into the realm of his art.



French comedian Dieudonne M'Bala M'Bala, left, and his lawyer Sanjay Mirabeau, right, leave a Paris court house, Wednesday, Feb. 4, 2015. Controversial French comic Dieudonne has gone on trial charged with "defending terrorism" in a Facebook post made after the three-day terror spree in Paris last month. He made a Facebook posting which said "I feel like Charlie Coulibaly."

(AP Photo/Michel Euler)

trial Wednesday charged with "defending terrorism" in a Facebook post after last month's three-day ter-

post, which has since been taken down, merges the names of Charlie Hebdo, the satirical magazine

a policewoman. The three Muslim extremists were killed in nearly simultaneous raids by security forces Jan.

Taiwan:

At least 23 killed after plane crashes into river

AUSTIN RAMZY

© 2015 New York Times

HONG KONG - A passenger plane crashed into a river in Taiwan's capital, Taipei, shortly after takeoff on Wednesday morning, killing at least 23 people, officials said. Rescue operations were underway to pull survivors from the water.

The plane, a TransAsia Airways twin turboprop flying as Flight 235, had just left Taipei Songshan Airport bound for nearby Kinmen, an island just off the mainland Chinese province of Fujian, Taiwan's Civil Aeronautics Administration said. Fifty-three passengers and five crew members were aboard, the agency said. In addition to those killed,



This image taken from video provided by TVBS shows a commercial airplane clipping an elevated roadway just before it careened into a river in Taipei, Taiwan, Wednesday, Feb. 4, 2015. The ATR-72 prop-jet aircraft had 58 people aboard.

(AP Photo/TVBS)

15 others were injured and the remainder were unaccounted for, the agency said.

Dramatic images taken from car dashboard cameras and posted online

showed the plane flying low over an elevated highway, its left wing clipping the road before it crashed into the river. The plane struck a taxi, injuring two people inside, the Taipei

government said.

Local television showed the plane's white and purple fuselage resting in the Keelung River in eastern Taipei, as rescuers in inflatable boats searched for survivors.

Rescuers were having difficulty reaching the submerged parts of the plane, a city government statement quoted Hsu Ching-sheng, a deputy fire chief, as saying.

Because the plane traveled some distance after striking the road, emergency responders had to expand their search area to account for the possibility that people were thrown from the plane, Hsu added. □

Pope Benedict, not Francis, unblocked Oscar Romero case

NICOLE WINFIELD
Associated Press

VATICAN CITY (AP) — The monsignor who spearheaded the saint-making process for El Salvador's slain Archbishop Oscar Romero said Wednesday it was Pope Benedict XVI — and not Pope Francis — who removed the final hurdle in the tortured, 35-year process.

Archbishop Vincenzo Paglia told reporters Benedict "gave the green light." Speaking a day after Francis declared that Romero died as a martyr for the faith, Paglia said Romero's beatification would likely be within a few months in San Salvador.

Paglia says Benedict told him on Dec. 20, 2012, the case had passed from the Vatican's doctrine office, where it had been held up for years over concerns about Romero's orthodoxy, to the saint-making office. From there it proceeded quickly, taking a mere two years for theologians, and then a committee of cardinals and bishops, to agree unanimously that Romero died as a martyr out of hatred for the faith.

Romero was gunned down on March 24, 1980, as he celebrated Mass in a hospital chapel in San Salvador. He had spoken out against repression by the army at the beginning of El Salvador's 1980-1992 civil war between the right-wing government and leftist rebels, a conflict that killed nearly 75,000 people. Paglia acknowledged some deep opposition to Romero's cause from within the church, both in Latin America and in the Vatican. Romero's primary opponent was the late Colombian Cardinal Alfonso Lopez Trujillo, a senior Vatican official famous for staunchly conservative views on abortion and sex. Lopez Trujillo, who died in 2008, led the Latin American churchmen who feared that beatifying Romero would be akin to beatifying liberation theology, the Catholic movement that holds that Jesus' teachings require followers to fight for social and economic justice. □

Metro-North

Continued from Front

The five train passengers who died were all men, according to a county official. One of the people injured remained in critical condition and one was in serious condition, while the rest were either stable or had been released from the hospital, officials at the Westchester County Medical Center told reporters at a news conference Wednesday.

The survivors' injuries included burns and smoke inhalation, fractures, lacerations, contusions and some crush injuries.

Cuomo, appearing on several morning television interviews, said that there was significant traffic near the railroad crossing where the accident happened and that it did not seem that the woman driving the vehicle, a Mercedes SUV, was trying to beat the train at the crossing at Commerce Street in Valhalla, New York.

Instead, he said, it was more likely that she was somehow confused.

Earlier in the evening, there had been an accident on a nearby highway, the Taconic State Parkway, and as a result drivers seeking less congested routes had moved onto side streets in nearby towns.

About 6:30 p.m., there was a line of cars on Commerce Street leading back onto the Taconic and a witness watched as the woman in the SUV found herself on the wrong side of the crossing bar as it went down.

"It looks like where she stopped she did not want to go on the tracks, but the proximity of the gate to her car, you know, it was dark - maybe she didn't know she was in front of the gate," Rick Hope, who said he was in a car directly behind the woman and backed up to give her room to do the same, told a local Fox affiliate WNYW. He said that the woman instead drove forward, only to find herself stuck on the tracks. Cuomo said it could not have been in a worse place. "That SUV was right in the middle of the track

and was hit directly in the middle of the car by the train," he said.

While the investigation was in its early stages, one person briefed on the matter said that it appeared that the woman was outside her car frantically waving at the train to stop at the time of crash.

The train pushed the SUV, which authority officials first said was a Jeep Cherokee, about 400 feet, the governor said.

"And 400 feet down, it was still on the middle of the track," Cuomo said. "It wrapped around the train and exploded."

It also caused the electrified third rail to tear from the tracks and rip through the first car in the train.

"This was as gruesome as I have seen," Cuomo said.

The Westchester County executive, Rob Astorino, arrived at the Westchester medical examiner's office, on the same campus in Valhalla as the medical center, late Wednesday morning and met with the wife of a man who was most likely killed in the accident.

"She's in total shock," Astorino said. "She obviously saw what happened last night," referring to news reports. "Her husband didn't return home and she didn't get a call." Officials still could not officially confirm the names of the victims.

While the medical examiner has an idea who all the victims are, Astorino said, "all but one of the bodies was charred beyond recognition."

"Once the dental records are provided, it will take hours and up to a day to possibly identify the bodies," he said. In the moments after the crash, witnesses described a horrifying scene in the first car of the train, which quickly became filled with smoke and flames.

The operator had been on the job nine months as a locomotive engineer, he said, and has been with the railroad for three years. A team from the National Transportation Safety Board arrived at the crash site Wednesday morning and took over the investigation. □



A Metro-North Railroad passenger train smolders after hitting a vehicle in Valhalla, N.Y., early Wednesday, Feb. 4, 2015. Five train passengers and the SUV's driver were killed in the crash, about 20 miles north of New York City. Authorities said the impact was so forceful the electrified third rail came up and pierced the train.

(AP Photo/The Journal News, Frank Becerra Jr)



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Defense nominee Carter finds easy audience at hearing

HELENE COOPER

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WASHINGTON - Ashton B. Carter, President Barack Obama's nominee for defense secretary, appeared on Wednesday to be cruising toward an easy confirmation, as Republican senators served up a series of expected questions that he handled deftly.

Carter, 60, a former deputy defense secretary, presented himself as an advocate of forceful yet prudent use of American power overseas. He implored Congress to get rid of the mandatory across-the-board budget cuts known as sequestration, echoing military officials who never lose an opportunity to deplore the potential cuts to their budget.

He also parried a challenge by Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., over the Obama administration's strategy to fight the Islamic State, which was lodged against the backdrop of the group's brutal execution of a Jordanian pilot.

"I believe I understand our strategy," Carter said, after McCain had asked him, "Do we have a strategy at this time?"

Carter even seemed to

of detainees from the military prison at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba. Several Republican senators, including McCain and Kelly Ayotte of New Hampshire, have

there.

Although Obama still has a long way to go, senior administration officials say the president is expecting Carter to move more

secretary has the power to delay the approval of prisoner transfers from Guantánamo. Fearful that the freed detainees could become a security threat to U.S. troops abroad, Hagel moved slowly, frustrating the White House, and he ultimately resigned under pressure.

The hearing Wednesday was the first time Republican senators concerned about the accelerated pace of Guantánamo transfers could question Carter about where he stood. But Ayotte simply asked him to promise that as defense secretary, he would not let the White House pressure him into increasing the pace of transfers. "Absolutely, Senator," Carter replied.

In interviews with senators last week, Carter largely supported Obama on the wide range of issues facing the military, like counterterrorism in Yemen and airstrikes in Iraq and Syria, according to congressional staff members. □



Ashton Carter, President Barack Obama's nominee for defense secretary, during a confirmation hearing before the Senate Armed Services Committee, on Capitol Hill in Washington, Feb. 4, 2015.
(Jabin Botsford/The New York Times)

get off easy on what was expected to be one of the most contentious issues: the increased pace of transfers

proposed legislation that would place a moratorium on the release of most of the remaining prisoners

aggressively on emptying Guantánamo than did Chuck Hagel, the current defense chief. The defense

Lawmakers support more military aid to Jordan fight IS

DONNA CASSATA

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Republicans and Democrats pressed senior Obama administration officials on Wednesday to move swiftly to provide aircraft parts, night-vision equipment and other weapons to Jordan following a video purport-

ing to show Islamic State militants burning a captured Jordanian air force pilot to death.

All 26 members of the Senate Armed Services Committee wrote in a letter to Secretary of State John Kerry and Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel that Jordan's situation and the unanim-

ity of the coalition battling the extremists "demands that we move with speed to ensure they receive the military materiel they require."

Jordan's King Abdullah II met with the committee and other lawmakers as well as President Barack Obama on Tuesday.

In the current year, the United States is providing Jordan with \$1 billion in economic and military assistance. The Defense Department is also giving an unspecified amount of help to Jordan to secure its border with Syria. Islamic militants have grabbed significant swaths of territory in Syria and Iraq. The senators said Abdullah expressed his gratitude for the U.S. aid, but "we were concerned to hear from the king that Jordan is experiencing complications and delays in obtaining certain types of military equipment through our foreign military sales system."

"Specifically, Jordan is seeking to obtain aircraft parts, additional night vision

equipment and precision munitions that the king feels he needs to secure his border and robustly execute combat air missions into Syria," the senators wrote.

The lawmakers also asked for a briefing for congressional staff no later than Feb. 13 for a status report on efforts to expedite aid.

At the White House, spokesman Josh Earnest said the administration would consider any aid package put forward by Congress, but that the White House would be looking for a specific request from Jordan's government.

Sen. John McCain, chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, said he expected his panel to swiftly approve legislation. He repeated his criticism that the Obama administration has "no strategy" for dealing with the Islamic State group. He said he hoped the video of the death of the Jordanian air force pilot, Lt. Muath Al-Kaseasbeh, will galvanize not only U.S. leadership but

also "the Arab world."

Sen. Joe Manchin, a Democrat, said that at Tuesday's session Abdullah did not ask for ground troops.

On the House side, Armed Services Committee Chairman Mac Thornberry, a Republican, said the king "expressed frustration that it takes so long for our bureaucracy to get help to him."

Obama has offered "his deepest condolences" to the king over the pilot's death, the White House said. Al-Kaseasbeh, who fell into the hands of the militants in December when his Jordanian F-16 crashed in Syria, is the only pilot from the U.S.-led coalition to have been captured to date.

His death sparked outrage in Jordan, where the country's participation in the coalition against the Islamic State group has not been popular. The video emerged following a week-long drama over a possible prisoner exchange with an al-Qaida operative imprisoned in Jordan. □

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US official proposes regulating Internet like phone service

ANNE FLAHERTY
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Declaring that the Internet must not be taken over by big business interests, a top U.S. regulator on Wednesday proposed dramatically expanding the government's power to oversee Internet service providers and establishing new rules that would prohibit companies from blocking or slowing data. Federal Communications Commission Chairman Tom Wheeler's proposal was a victory for consumer advocates who support "net neutrality," the idea that Internet providers allow data to move across its networks without interference. Open Internet rules had been in place but were recently knocked down by a federal court. Wheeler's approach attempts to erase any legal uncertainty by reclassifying the Internet as a telecommunications service and regulating it much like telephones. The rules would apply to both wireless and wired services. Republicans

and industry officials say that would discourage investment and increase taxes. The FCC will vote Feb. 26 on the proposal. "It is counterproductive because heavy regulation of the Internet will create uncertainty and chill investment among the many players — not just Internet service providers — that now will need to consider FCC rules before launching new services," said Michael Glover, Verizon senior vice president and deputy general counsel. But Wheeler and consumer groups said the move is necessary to prevent providers from creating slow or fast lanes on the Internet in which content companies like Netflix can pay to jump to the head of the queue. "My proposal assures the rights of Internet users to go where they want, when they want, and the rights of innovators to introduce new products without asking anyone's permission," Wheeler wrote in an opinion piece that Wired magazine posted online.



Federal Communications Commission (FCC) Chairman Tom Wheeler speaks during new conference in Washington.
(AP Photo/Jose Luis Magana)

Wheeler's plan is an aggressive leap in Internet regulation in an industry that has so far seen little government oversight. The proposal calls for treating Internet service like a public utility, although

Wheeler said he would not use the new regulations to tell broadband providers how much to charge customers, as the law would allow. Industry is fighting this approach because it says

it's only a matter of time before the rules grow more stringent and the FCC is regulating how much Internet providers can charge. "Despite the repeated assurances from the president and Chairman Wheeler, we remain concerned that this proposal will confer sweeping discretion to regulate rates and set the economic terms and conditions of business relationships," said Michael Powell, head of the National Cable and Telecommunications Association and former FCC chairman. Sen. John Thune, chairman of the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee, called the plan "radical" and a "power grab" by the FCC. □

Lawyers: Evidence shows Saudi Arabia aided the 9/11 hijackers

NEW YORK (AP) — Lawyers for victims of the Sept. 11 attacks say in a lawsuit that they have amassed new evidence that agents of Saudi Arabia "knowingly and directly" helped the hijackers. They say they have obtained sworn testimony from the so-called 20th hijacker to support their claims. But the Embassy of Saudi Arabia in Washington said in a statement Wednesday that Zacarias Moussaoui's claims come from a "deranged criminal" and there

is no evidence to support them. Lawyers wrote in papers filed Tuesday in federal court in Manhattan that their claims are supported by an "expansive volume" of previously unavailable U.S. and foreign intelligence reports, congressional testimony, government reports and other information. Saudi Arabia says results of the most investigated crime in history show no involvement by the Saudi government or officials. □

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Ex-medical researcher gets life in wife's cyanide death

JOE MANDAK
Associated Press

PITTSBURGH (AP) — A former University of Pittsburgh Medical Center researcher

has been sentenced to a mandatory term of life in prison without possibility of parole in the cyanide poisoning death of his neurologist wife.

Sixty-six-year-old Robert Ferrante was convicted in November of first-degree murder in the April 2013

death of 41-year-old Dr. Autumn Klein. Prosecutors said he laced her energy drink with cyanide.

The victim's mother, Lois Klein, said in a statement read in court Wednesday by an assistant prosecutor that the murder had robbed her and her husband of their only child.

She said, "The light of our lives has now been extinguished."

Ferrante has steadfastly denied poisoning Klein by putting cyanide he acknowledged ordering for his research laboratory into a creatine energy drink he allegedly gave her in April 2013, when she came home from work late one night. She immediately collapsed and died three days later, authorities said. Prosecutors showed the jury text messages in which Ferrante told Klein the drink might help her ovulate and conceive a second child,

which witnesses said Klein was obsessed with having. Ferrante, though outwardly supportive, allegedly resented that, however, and feared Klein might divorce him so he killed her instead, according to prosecutors. A prominent researcher into Lou Gehrig's disease, Ferrante testified he bought the poison only because he used it to mimic the disease's effects on healthy cells in his laboratory. But he also testified that he didn't greet Klein at the couple's back door and hand her the energy drink the night she fell suddenly ill, even though police detectives said Ferrante told them that's what happened when they first interviewed him.

Jurors indicated that alleged change of Ferrante's story, and other evidence, prompted them to reject his denials and convict him. □



Dr. Robert Ferrante, center, is escorted to court by Allegheny County Sheriff deputies during his trial on charges of the 2013 killing of his neurologist wife with cyanide in Pittsburgh. On Wednesday Feb. 4, 2015, Ferrante was sentenced to a mandatory term of life in prison without possibility of parole in the cyanide poisoning death of his wife, Dr. Autumn Klein.

(AP Photo/Keth Srakocic)

Man convicted of operating underground website Silk Road

LARRY NEUMEISTER
TOM HAYS
Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — A man was swiftly convicted Wednesday of creating and operating an underground website that prosecutors said enabled drug dealers around the world to reach customers they would never find on the street.

Ross William Ulbricht was convicted of seven drug and conspiracy counts. The jury's verdict in federal court in Manhattan came after little more than three hours of deliberations and one day after prosecutors urged jurors to follow Ulbricht's "digital fingerprints."

The government said drug dealing made up nearly all of Silk Road's sales dur-

ing its nearly three years in business, which ended with Ulbricht's October 2013 arrest. Prosecutors also discounted defense claims that Ulbricht was framed by others in a murky Internet world where nothing is what it seems.

Prosecutors said Ulbricht enabled more than 1 million drug deals on Silk Road and earned about \$18 million in bitcoins. Sales of illegal drugs of every type were delivered through the website, representing at least \$180 million in sales, they said. Ulbricht had several supporters among the spectators. When the verdict was announced, his father dropped his head in his hands. Lyn Ulbricht, his mother, exited the court-

room complaining that the defense had been barred from putting on evidence that would help her son.

The government said the fallacy of Ulbricht's promise of anonymity in the dark corners of the Internet as a reason for customers to peddle their illegal merchandise online was exposed by numerous trial witnesses, including the first: Homeland Security Agent Jared Der-Yeghiayan.

He testified that shipments originating on the website first came to his attention in June 2011 when X-rays and canine detection dogs at Chicago's O'Hare Airport turned up envelopes from the Netherlands containing Ecstasy pills wrapped

in vacuum seal and foil. Soon, the drugs were being sent through many countries.

By late September, Der-Yeghiayan said he learned about Silk Road and began infiltrating it, taking over staff member accounts each time one was arrested or agreed to cooperate.

The agent testified that the website's online boss went by the alias Dread Pirate Roberts, a reference to the swashbuckling character in "The Princess Bride," and prosecutors presented numerous instant message conversations involving a person using that persona.

During closing arguments Tuesday, defense attorney Joshua Dratel said his client quit Silk Road

soon after creating it to sell anything on the Internet and before the website was overrun by drug dealers.

But Assistant U.S. Attorney Serrin Turner said Ulbricht operated the site from beginning to end and was willing to do anything to protect it. He cited emails that he said showed Ulbricht was willing to spend hundreds of thousands of dollars to kill as many as five people he thought were threats to his operation.

Ulbricht faced no murder charges in New York, but still awaits trial in Baltimore in a murder-to-hire plot.

His sentencing in New York is scheduled for May 15, and some of the charges carry a maximum of life in prison. □

US Financial Front:

American businesses post steady job gain in January



Job seekers sign in at a job fair in Miami Beach, Fla. Payroll processor ADP reported U.S. companies hired at a solid pace last month, on Wednesday, Feb. 4, 2015.

(AP Photo/Wilfredo Lee)

C. S. RUGABER
AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. companies hired at a solid pace last month, a private survey found, the latest sign of steady improvement in the job market.

Payroll processor ADP said Wednesday that companies added 213,000 jobs last month, a decent increase though also the smallest in four months. The figure suggests Friday's government report will also show a solid burst of hiring. Economists surveyed by FactSet expect the government's report will show that employers added 230,000 jobs.

The ADP numbers cover only private businesses and sometimes diverge from the government's more comprehensive report, which includes government agencies. Businesses have added 200,000 jobs or more in nine of the past 10 months, according to the ADP report. Manufacturers added 14,000 jobs, down from 23,000 in December. Construction companies hired 18,000 more workers, down from 26,000 the previous month. But services companies ramped up hiring: A category that includes retail, transportation and utilities firms added 54,000 jobs, up

from 40,000 in December. Mark Zandi, chief economist at Moody's Analytics,

which compiles the report, said that oil and gas drilling companies have started to

cut back on their payrolls in response to a sharp drop in the price of oil. □



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US services firms grew at a faster pace in January

MARTIN CRUTSINGER
AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. services firms grew at a slightly faster pace in January, led by hotels, restaurants and financial firms. The Institute for Supply Management said Wednesday that its services index rose to 56.7 in January, up a small amount from a revised reading of 56.5 in December. Both months were below a revised November reading of 58.8, which was the best showing since last May. The November level was revised substantially lower from a previous estimate of 59.3, which had been near an eight-year high.

Any reading over 50 indicates expansion.

Paul Ashworth, chief U.S. economist at Capital Economics, said that the services sector of the economy is being helped by the boost to households' purchasing power from lower energy prices, which is giving consumers more to spend on other items. The ISM reported on Monday that its index for manufacturing fell to 53.5 in January, the third straight drop, pushing this gauge of factory activity to its slowest pace in a year. The ISM is a trade group of purchasing managers. Its survey of services firms covers businesses that employ 90 percent of the American workforce, including retail, construction, health care and financial services companies. □

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ALAN BLINDER

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JACKSON, Miss. - The Mississippi state epidemiologist, Dr. Thomas E. Dobbs III, stood in a crowded room at the state Capitol this week and waited for a legislative verdict on the law that fostered what he regards as a public health triumph in a place that has few of them: the country's highest immunization rate among kindergarten students.

But in recent weeks, the nearly unbending nature of Mississippi's law requiring students to be vaccinated has been in jeopardy, with two dozen lawmakers publicly supporting an exemption for "conscientious beliefs."

The debate, coming as other states grappled with a measles outbreak, turned Mississippi into one more battleground between medical experts who champion vaccinations and parents who fear the government's role in medical decision-making.

"We have been a victim of our success, and people don't realize how bad these diseases are," Dobbs said in an interview before lawmakers met Tuesday to consider a bill that would have expanded exceptions to the vaccine requirement. "But by and large, I think there's an increasing understanding of how important it is to maintain our invaluable defense against unnecessary illnesses."

Members of the education committee for the House of Representatives, in effect, endorsed the state's current approach Tuesday. By a voice vote, they ad-

vanced a heavily amended version of the bill that now calls for only technical changes to Mississippi's law, which has been largely untouched since the late 1970s. The law requires all children in public and private schools to have certain immunizations, including for chickenpox, hepatitis B and measles. Generally, children must have the vaccines by the time they are in kindergarten.

Mississippi is one of two states that permit neither religious nor philosophical exemptions to its vaccination program. West Virginia is the other. Only children with medical conditions that would be exacerbated by vaccines may enroll in Mississippi schools without completing the immunization schedule, which calls for five vaccines.

For the 2013-14 academic year, Mississippi reported that nearly all of its 45,719 kindergarten students had been adequately immunized, and the state's measles, mumps and rubella vaccination rate was about 5 percentage points higher than the national median of 94.7 percent. For kindergartners that year, Mississippi approved just 17 medical exemptions, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said. Neighboring Arkansas, which had about 3,100 fewer kindergarten students than Mississippi that year, recorded 24 medical exemptions, along with 468 religious or philosophical exemptions.

Although officials like Dobbs applauded the outcomes associated with the vaccination program, the

inflexibility bred discontent among some legislators, as well as people beyond Jackson.

The original version of the bill that went before lawmakers Tuesday would have required parents who cited conscientious beliefs as the basis for an exemp-

tion to indicate an understanding of "the benefits and risks of vaccinations and the benefits and risks of not being vaccinated."

The proposal's supporters, many of whom do not fully agree with parents who consider vaccines harmful, sought to portray the bill as grounded in personal freedoms.



Supporters of a bill that would loosen the state's strict vaccination laws during a meeting at the Capitol about the legislation, in Jackson, Miss., Feb. 3, 2015. Mississippi is one of two states -- West Virginia is the other -- that permit neither religious nor philosophical exemptions to its vaccination program.
 (William Widmer/The New York Times)

"It is a medical treatment," said Amy Martin, a nurse from the Jackson area who, dressed in a white coat, walked the state Capitol's hallways Tuesday. "All medical treatments - medication, procedures -

so overbearing that she opted to home-school her son and daughter so that they could avoid certain inoculations.

"I don't like being coerced into something," said Magee, of McComb, a city of about 13,000 people near the Louisiana border. "My husband and I prayerfully and carefully made that decision, and there's no room for prayerful, careful decisions in Mississippi concerning our vaccine schedule."

Magee said she did not wish for Mississippi's vaccine program to be abol-

ished. She said she wanted a more relaxed schedule and the right to choose which shots her children would receive and when. She also said the extraordinary vaccination rate that Mississippi officials cherish was shameful.

"I'm not proud of it," Ma-

gee said. "I don't think it's something to be proud of. I think all it shows is that we are being extorted for our reputation of ignorance in Mississippi. We bring up the national rear in everything that matters. I think it's silly to look at that vaccine rate and think that's something to be proud of."

But Dobbs said the concerns of "a small group of loud constituents" were often based on misinformation, and he said Mississippi officials feared that changing the immunization rules would lead to increases in measles and pertussis. □

Jordan says IS can be defeated; uproar over burn video

KARIN LAUB

Associated Press

AMMAN, Jordan (AP) —

Jordan called Wednesday for a decisive battle against the Islamic State group, declaring "this evil can and should be defeated," after the militants burned a Jordanian pilot to death in a cage and gleefully broadcast the horrific images on outdoor screens in their stronghold. Waves of revulsion over the killing washed across the Middle East, a region long accustomed to violence. In mosques, streets and coffee shops, Muslims denounced the militants' brutality and distanced themselves from their violent version of Islam.

Even a prominent preacher with close links to jihadi groups said Islamic State militants miscalculated if they hoped the images of the pilot's agony would galvanize greater opposition to a U.S.-led military coalition that has been bombing targets of the group.

"After millions of Muslims were cursing every pilot (in the coalition), with this act, they (IS) have made the burned one into a symbol," Abdullah al-Muhaysni, a Saudi sheik, wrote on his Twitter account.

The Islamic State group, which controls large areas of Iraq and Syria, has killed captives in the past, post-

ing videos of beheadings and sparking widespread condemnation. However, the killing of Lt. Muath al-Kaseasbeh, who crashed over Syria in December, also highlighted the vulnerability of Jordan, a key

Syria, at a time of a sharp economic downturn.

Jordan receives hundreds of millions of dollars in foreign aid a year, but grinding social problems persist, including high unemployment among young men,

they control.

The United States and Israel are particularly concerned about any signs of turmoil. Israel views Jordan as an important land buffer and the two countries share intelligence.

Sen. Joe Manchin, a Democrat and member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, said Jordan's King Abdullah II — who met with lawmakers and President Barack Obama on Tuesday — must be given "all of the military equipment" he needs to combat the group. He said Abdullah did not ask for ground troops.

At the White House, spokesman Josh Earnest said the administration would consider any aid package put forward by Congress, but that the White House would be looking for a specific request from Jordan's government.

Sen. John McCain, chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, said he expected his panel to swiftly approve legislation. He repeated his criticism that the Obama administration has "no strategy" for dealing with the Islamic State group, and said he hoped the video of al-Kaseasbeh's death will galvanize not only U.S. leadership but "the Arab world."

Abdullah rushed home after his Washington meetings, cutting short his U.S. trip, to rally domestic support for an even tougher line against the militants. In September, Jordan joined the U.S.-led military coalition that began bombing Islamic State group targets in Syria and Iraq. □



Safi al-Kaseasbeh, center, father of slain Jordanian pilot, Lt. Muath al-Kaseasbeh is escorted by relatives while receiving condolences in front of the Kaseasbeh tribe's gathering divan at their home village of Ai, near Karak, Jordan, Wednesday, Feb. 4, 2015. Jordan executed two al-Qaida prisoners before dawn Wednesday, just hours after an online video purported to show Islamic State group militants burning a captured Jordanian pilot to death in a cage.

(AP Photo/Nasser Nasser)

Western ally in the region, to threats from extremists.

Jordan was long considered an island of relative stability in a turbulent region, but in recent years had to absorb hundreds of thousands of war refugees, first from Iraq and then

a reservoir of potential IS recruits.

Experts estimate Islamic State and other jihadi groups have thousands of supporters in the kingdom, with an upswing last year after the militants declared a caliphate in the areas

In Washington, congressional support built Wednesday for increased U.S. military assistance to the kingdom. Currently, the United States is providing Jordan with \$1 billion annually in economic and military assistance.

Using troops and planes, 3 African nations battle Boko Haram

HARUNA UMAR,

MICHELLE FAUL

Associated Press

MAIDUGURI, Nigeria (AP) —

Three militaries, using ground troops and warplanes, fought Boko Haram on at least two fronts Wednesday with hundreds of the Islamic fighters reported dead as the conflict took on a growing international perspective.

Chad's army said its troops were attacked Tuesday in Cameroon by Boko Haram, the Nigerian extremist group that has slaughtered and kidnapped civilians and has had the upper hand against Nigeria's military. The Chadian troops'

response underscores other African nation's newfound resoluteness to combat what they perceive as a regional threat.

"Our valiant forces responded vigorously, a chase was immediately instituted all the way to their base at Gamboru and Ngala (in Nigeria), where they were completely wiped out," spokesman Col. Azem Bermendoa said on national television Tuesday night.

More than 200 extremists and nine Chadian troops were killed, he said.

On Wednesday, hundreds of Boko Haram fighters driven out of Gamboru crossed

the border and attacked Chadian military posts in Fotokol, in far northern Cameroon, residents and military officers said.

Cameroonian troops mobilized to join the Chadians in confronting the invaders, resident journalist Ledoux Blaise Mal Moussa told The Associated Press by telephone. The ongoing battle was confirmed by Cameroonian military officers who spoke on condition of anonymity because they are not authorized to speak to reporters. Most Fotokol residents had weeks ago fled the town which Boko Haram was using to resupply. Meanwhile, warplanes

from Nigeria and jet fighters and helicopter gunships from Chad pursued a bombing campaign that has forced the Islamic fighters from more than a dozen towns in northeast Nigeria where Boko Haram declared an Islamic caliphate in August.

This week's military actions mark the biggest offensive against Boko Haram in its more than five-year history and come as Nigerians prepare to vote in presidential elections Feb. 14 that are expected to be very close. African Union officials were meeting Wednesday in Cameroon to finalize a mandate for a 7,500-strong

multinational force from Nigeria and its four francophone neighbors to confront the extremists who in recent months have seized more than 130 towns and villages. Those population centers lie in three of Nigeria's northeastern states bordering Cameroon, Chad and Niger. Boko Haram has held many of the towns for as long as six months.

The Nigerian jets had started their bombing runs on Monday in Nigeria's Sambisa Forest, where the extremists have camps and first took nearly 300 kidnapped schoolgirls last April, witnesses said. □

Rocket fire kills at least 5 near hospital in Donetsk

BALINT SZLANKO
YURAS KARMANAU
Associated Press
DONETSK, Ukraine (AP)

— Rocket salvos hit a previously safe section of Ukraine's rebel stronghold of Donetsk on Wednesday, killing at least five people and damaging a hospital, six schools and five kindergartens, rebels said.

The fighting between Russia-backed separatists and government troops in eastern Ukraine escalated sharply in January, with more than 220 civilians killed in the past three weeks alone, according to the United Nations. The world body has sharply criticized both sides for indiscriminate shelling that is causing civilian deaths.

The rebel-run Donetsk News Agency, citing police, reported five people killed by shelling around the hospital in the city's western Tekstilshchik district. City officials in Donetsk said the number of casualties could not immediately be established.

An Associated Press reporter at the scene shortly after the attack found one body covered by a sheet on the ground near a crater from a projectile. The hospital was damaged by shrapnel and its windows were shattered.

"There were six or seven explosions," said witness

Vladimir Oryol. "We fell on the ground, people were screaming. In fact, it was very scary and horrible."

Separatist official Eduard Basurin told reporters that four civilians had been killed in the past day before Wednesday's shelling. In Kiev, military spokesman Vladislav Seleznev said

agree to give weapons to Ukraine's army for its fight against the rebels, which has left more than 5,300 people dead since April.

President Barack Obama has opposed providing lethal assistance, but the surge in fighting has reportedly spurred the White House to review the policy.

said on a visit to Kharkiv, a government-controlled city in eastern Ukraine.

Germany and France strongly oppose the idea, however. German Chancellor Angela Merkel's spokesman indicated the issue would be discussed up when Merkel meets Obama in Washington



An elderly man is helped to board a bus to leave the town of Debaltseve Ukraine. Rocket salvos hit a previously safe section of Ukraine's rebel stronghold of Donetsk on Wednesday, killing at least five people and damaging a hospital, six schools and five kindergartens, rebels said.

two Ukrainian troops have been killed and 18 injured in the past 24 hours.

With U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry headed to Kiev on Thursday, Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko said he was confident that the United States would

"I don't have the slightest doubt that the decision to supply Ukraine with weapons will be made by the United States as well as by other partners of ours, because we need to have the capability to defend ourselves," Poroshenko

next week.

"We will not deliver any lethal weapons," Merkel spokesman Steffen Seibert said Wednesday. "We are convinced that there can be no military solution to this already very bloody conflict." □

Man in France who stabbed 3 had been held in questioning

DAN BILEFSKY
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PARIS - The attacker who stabbed three soldiers guarding a Jewish community center in Nice on Tuesday had been questioned by counterterrorism officers and released just days before the attack, a senior police official said Wednesday.

The man, Moussa Coulibaly, was arrested Tuesday in Nice, in the south of France, after he lunged at the throat of a soldier near the Jewish center and wounded him and two other soldiers who intervened. The attack raised alarm in a country still reeling from the terrorist attacks last month in Paris that left 17 people dead.

Christophe Crépin, a senior police official, said Coulibaly, who was known to French counterterrorism services, had been questioned by the intelligence services in France after he flew to Turkey on Jan. 28. Turkey is frequently used as a gateway by Europeans seeking to join extremist groups in Syria. But Crépin said that no formal investigation was opened and that Coulibaly was released, as there was insufficient evidence that he posed a threat.

"We can't arrest and detain every person who comes back from Turkey," he said. "We must obey the rule of law, and uphold civil liberties, and there was nothing to suggest Coulibaly would commit such an attack."

The suspect has the same surname as Amédy Coulibaly, the man who killed four people at a kosher supermarket last month in Paris and was then killed by the police, but the authorities have thus far not established a link between them. While the soldiers were not seriously wounded and no one at the Jewish center was harmed, the case underlines the challenges that counterterrorism forces face when confronted with petty criminals like Coulibaly. □

Greece:

Leader of far-right Golden Dawn to stand trial

F. KARABATZAKIS
D. GATOPOULOS
Associated Press

ATHENS, Greece (AP) — A judicial panel in Greece ruled Wednesday that the leader and lawmakers from the extreme right Golden Dawn party will stand trial on charges of participating in a criminal group — an offence that carries a 20-year prison sentence.

The panel voted that all 18 Golden Dawn lawmakers who held seats in Greece's previous parliament will stand trial, along with 52 other defendants.

No trial date was set.

Golden Dawn, originally founded as a neo-Nazi par-

ty, came third in parliamentary elections last month.

Thirteen lawmakers of the 18 standing trial were re-elected in the Jan. 25 polls and were due to be sworn in Thursday when the new 300-member parliament holds its opening session. Six of those, including party leader Nikos Michaloliakos are in pre-trial detention, but are expected to participate as planned in the ceremony after being escorted to parliament and back to prison by police.

A crackdown against the party was launched in September 2013, following the murder of Greek rap singer Pavlos Fyssas, allegedly by

a Golden Dawn volunteer. Golden Dawn says it has no involvement in any violent activities and rejects the charges. It argues that its senior members are victims of political conspiracy aimed at stemming their surge in popularity during Greece's major financial crisis.

The members were ordered to stand trial after the investigation found "evidence to support the offences of membership of a criminal organization and aggravated unlawful possession of weapons," according to a copy of the indictment seen by the Associated Press.

Prosecutor Isidoros Doyiakos, who headed the investigation into Golden Dawn's activities, said the organization aimed "to propagate and impose its political beliefs and theories through violence."

Doyiakos said Golden Dawn's organized assault squads "armed with bats iron bars, brass knuckles, and knives" to carry out streets attacks against immigrants and left-wing activists.

The findings were based largely on testimony from a protected witnesses and material from computer hard drives seized in multiple police raids. □



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Westerners join Kurds fighting Islamic State group in Iraq

**VIVIAN SALAMA
BRAM JANSSEN
Associated Press**

SINJAR, Iraq (AP) — As Kurdish fighters gathered around a fire in this damp, frigid mountain town in northwestern Iraq, exhausted from battling the Islamic State group, a surprising recruit wearing a tactical vest with the words "Christ is Lord" scribbled on it joined them. The fighter, with a sniper rifle slung over his shoulder and a Rambo-styled bandanna around his head, is 28-year-old Jordan Matson from Sturtevant, Wisconsin, a former U.S. Army soldier who joined the Kurds to fight the extremist group now holding a third of Iraq and neighboring Syria. "I'm not going back until the fight is finished and ISIS is crippled," Matson told The Associated Press, using an alternate acronym for the militant group. "I decided that if my government wasn't going to do anything to help this country, especially Kurdish people who stood by us for 10 years and helped us out while we were in this country, then I was going to do something."

Matson and dozens of other Westerners now fight with the Kurds, spurred on by Kurdish social media campaigners and a sense of duty rooted in the 2003-2011 U.S.-led military intervention in Iraq. And while the U.S. and its coalition allies bomb the extremists from the air, Kurds say they hope more Westerners will join them on the ground to fight.

Foreigners joining other people's wars is nothing new, from the French Foreign Legion to the International Brigades of the Spanish Civil War. The Kurds, however, have

turned to the Internet to find warriors, creating a Facebook page called "The Lions of Rojava" with the stated aim being to send "terrorists to hell and save humanity." The page also frequently features portraits of smiling, beau-

tiful and heavily armed Kurdish female commanders and fighters. Matson, three other Americans and an Australian national who spoke to the AP all said they arranged to join Kurdish forces through the Facebook page, run by the People's Protection Units, or YPG, the main Syrian Kurdish militia fighting in northern Syria and Iraq. They crossed from Turkey into Syria, now in its fourth year of civil war, before later joining a Kurdish offensive sweeping into Iraq last month. They now are based in Sinjar, where stone homes painted

green, pink and yellow have been damaged in fighting and are surrounded by sandbags and piles of rubble. Thousands of Yazidi residents fled into the surrounding mountains last year during the Islamic State offensive. they make it back home. So far, the U.S. hasn't banned Americans from fighting with militias against the Islamic State group, though it considers the Turkey-based Kurdish Workers' Party, commonly known as the PKK, a ter-

rorist organization. The PKK has been fighting alongside the YPG in Sinjar and in the Syrian town of Kobani. Australians are forbidden by law from fighting with any force outside of the Australian national army. Australia was also one of the first countries to criminalize travel to Syria's al-Raqqah province, where the Islamic State group has established the de facto capital of its self-styled caliphate. The U.S. Embassy in Baghdad had no immediate response to an AP query about Americans fighting with the Kurds.

It's unclear how many foreigners total are fighting with the YPG and other Kurdish forces, though both foreigners and Kurds say there are "dozens." There's a clear camaraderie among the foreign fighters in Sinjar, who mostly travel in pairs.

A number of YPG fighters, many of them as young as 17, joke and tease their new foreign friends, speaking to them in the local Kurdish dialect. One fighter, 21-year-old Khalil Oysal from Syria, spends much of his time with the foreigners since he can speak English.

"We learn from them and they learn from us," said Oysal, who American and Australian fighters have nicknamed Bucky. "They speak with us and they like to joke. They share with us many things."

Western fighters in Sinjar say there is a major drive to recruit as many foreigners as possible, especially those with military training, as many of young Kurdish fighters have little or no experience. The young fighters often pick up weapons and ammunition from dead Islamic State militants. They also have no body armor.

Two of the foreign fighters said they had just returned from visiting an American fighter badly wounded in battle. They said another foreign fighter, a Dutch national, was severely wounded in battle in Syria last week.

"You need to know what you're getting into," Matson said. "A lot of times you're going out, you're in a mud hut. ... You have bullets and a blanket, and sometimes you just have bread, but you need to hold the line." □



In this Thursday, Jan. 29, 2015 photo, Jordan Matson, 28, right, a former U.S. Army soldier from Sturtevant, Wis., takes a break with other fighters from the main Kurdish militia, the People's Protection Units, or YPG, in Sinjar, Iraq. Matson and dozens of other Westerners now fight with the Kurds, spurred on by Kurdish social media campaigners and a sense of duty many feel after Iraq, the target of a decade-long U.S.-led military campaign, collapsed under an Islamic State group offensive within days last summer. (AP Photo/Vivian Salama)

Foreigners like Matson say they are drawn to helping Kurds, Yazidis and other minority ethnic groups caught up in the battle, facing possible destruction at the hand of extremists. "How many people were sold into slavery or killed just for being part of a different ethnic group or religion?" Matson said. "That's something I am willing to die to defend." The other Westerners who talked to the AP spoke on condition of anonymity, fearing the reaction of their families, who didn't know where they were, or possible legal troubles if

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Survey finds eurozone began 2015 stronger than thought

PAN PYLAS

Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Maybe all the doom and gloom surrounding the 19-country eurozone has been overdone.

A couple of closely monitored indicators suggest the eurozone was performing stronger at the turn of the year than previously thought, partly because of the positive impact of lower oil prices.

Eurostat, the EU's statistics office, said retail sales rose 0.3 percent in December. That's the third-straight monthly increase and suggests retail sales have helped economic growth in the fourth quarter, for which figures are due to be published next week.

Separately, financial information company Markit said its purchasing managers' index, a gauge of business activity, spiked

to a six-month high of 52.6 points in January from the previous month's 51.4.

January's outcome was better than the initial estimate of 52.2 and points to a quarter-on-quarter growth rate of 0.3 percent — low by historical standards but largely better than the growth recorded over the past couple of years. Anything above 50 indicates expansion.

Among the big-four nations,

Markit found economic activity grew in Germany, Italy and Spain, but the downturn in the French economy extended into its ninth month. Markit also found that the rate of job creation inched up to its best level since mid-2011. Markit also laid out the hope that the European Central Bank's recent decision to back a 1 trillion-euro (\$1.12 trillion) stimulus should lift growth further.

"The move to full-scale quantitative easing by the ECB should help drive even stronger growth in coming months," said Chris Williamson, chief economist at Markit.

Ostensibly, the stimulus is meant to get inflation in the eurozone back to target. The ECB is trying to bring up inflation — at minus 0.6 percent in the year to January — to just under 2 percent annually. □

Petrobras says CEO stepping down amid corruption scandal

JENNY BARCHFIELD

BRAD BROOKS

Associated Press

RIO DE JANEIRO (AP) — Embattled Brazilian oil company Petrobras said Wednesday the company's chief executive officer and five other top figures stepped down amid a long-running and massive kickback scandal at the firm.

Government-run Petrobras said in a one-line statement on its website that CEO Maria das Gracas Foster and five other executive directors were out. None of the top officials are facing charges of wrongdoing, but prosecutors have said the investigation is still in its early stages.

For months there have been loud calls from business and political circles for a shakeup of Petrobras' top executives. Even before the scandal broke early last year, the company was saddled with massive debt and was not making good on its potential in developing Brazil's massive offshore oil fields that could hold upward of 100 billion barrels.

Petrobras has lost billions in market value as daily reports broke news about the extent of the alleged corruption scheme. Prosecutors say hundreds of millions

in bribes were paid by construction and engineering firms in return for inflated contracts worth billions.

Petrobras has seen its debt downgraded by both

Moody's and Fitch in the past week, further choking its ability to borrow on international markets.

The oil firm is Brazil's biggest company and is charged

with tapping massive offshore oil fields and creating wealth that leaders hope will propel the country to developed world status. But the debt-plagued firm hasn't met development goals, and the riches remain buried deep under the sea. "This whole scandal at Petrobras is a disaster for Brazil," said Carlos Pereira, a political analyst at the Getulio Vargas think tank in Rio. "A company that was a national symbol is today facing a melancholic situation."

The scandal and Foster's resignation, he said, "reveal the enormous incompetence of the government to deal with the company which fell victim to a criminal group of politicians" who stole millions from Petrobras.

"A political elite destroyed the company," he said.

Rousseff had yet to comment on Foster's resignation Wednesday afternoon. Brazilian prosecutors have said the kickback scheme involved at least \$800 million in bribes and other illegal funds. □



A worker whose company is contracted by Brazil's government-run oil company, Petrobras, holds a sign that reads in Portuguese "Petrobras and Alusa/Alumini, where's the money?" to protest corruption and that they haven't been paid, outside Rio's Justice Labor Court in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, Wednesday, Feb. 4, 2015. Petrobras said Wednesday the company's chief executive officer and five other top figures stepped down amid a long-running and massive kickback scandal at the firm.

(AP Photo/Silvia Izquierdo)

China moves to boost lending, reverse slowdown

JOE McDONALD

Associated Press

BEIJING (AP) — China on Wednesday cut the minimum level of reserves its banks are required to hold in a new move to reverse a deepening economic slowdown. The reduction will make more money available for lending and support small and rural enterprises, construction proj-

ects and other activity, the People's Bank of China said. It said the amount of their deposits that China's commercial lenders will be required to hold in reserve will be reduced by at least 0.5 percent. The reduction for rural banks will be bigger. Analysts expected new stimulus measures after last year's economic growth slumped to a 24-

year low of 7.4 percent. The move is the equivalent of adding about 600 billion yuan (\$96 billion) to the balance sheets of China's state banks, according to Mark Williams of Capital Economics. He said, however, that because of loan quotas and other regulatory restrictions, the direct impact on lending would be smaller than that. "The

move increases their capacity to lend by allowing them to hold more customer deposits for a given level of reserves," said Williams in a report. China's waning growth, along with stagnation in Europe and Japan, was behind recent downgrades in forecasts for the global economy this year and next. Hoping to reverse economic malaise,

the European Central Bank and Bank of Japan have launched unprecedented stimulus efforts. Much of China's slowdown over the past three years has been intentional and the result of the ruling Communist Party's efforts to nurture more self-sustaining growth based on domestic consumption instead of exports and investment. □



New Menu a Hit at Pure Beach Bar Lounge and Restaurant



PALM BEACH - Located at Divi Aruba Phoenix Beach Resort, Pure Beach is a casual all day dining café and bar with European beach club aesthetics. Encircled by the waters of the freeform resort pool, and bordered by the spectacular beachfront, the café

is outfitted with comfortable couches for lounging along with low tables and chairs, a friendly dining room set up and plenty of stools at the bar, all decorated in a chic beige and white color scheme.

The curtain went up on a refreshed menu recently, featuring incredibly delicious food, artistically plated and served in generous portions.

The menu was inspired by the culinary team of chefs at Divi Resorts, with famed Corporate Executive Chef Matt Boland, at the helm. Chef Matt reports researching classic Caribbean sauces and garnishes, as well as using past menus as resources, bringing back top favorites in novel presentations, using the freshest fish, meat,



vegetables and herbs available on the island, and conducting extensive tastings, with his team of chefs and with guests, to identify just the right type of beach-vacation dishes, befitting this charming all day lounge, bar and restaurant, in the island's most relaxed beachfront setting.

You will find Caribbean Fish Tenders on the menu, made of crispy and flaky flash-fried grouper, served with a mango lime dipping sauce. The Shrimp & Seafood Ceviche is brimming with shrimp, scallops and calamari infused with lime and fresh herbs, served with pickled onions and peppers and a coconut cocktail sauce; the Greek Beef Tenderloin Kabob, flaunts tenderloin tips, onions and peppers, topped with feta cheese and Kalamata olives; and the Tuna Tataki, delivers sesame crusted seared ahi tuna, served over a wakame seaweed salad with a teriyaki glaze and wasabi aioli.

The menu goes on to introduce the Mojo Chicken Quesadilla, in a spinach

tortilla filled with melted cheese and grilled chicken, served with pico de gallo, guacamole and sour cream, and the star of the lineup, the Kobe Sliders, featuring three mini wagyu kobe beef burgers, topped with Gouda cheese and red wine caramelized onions. The Pure Beach Sampler is a great idea, for friends to share a sampling of the restaurant's most popular appetizers, includ-

Baked Potato, BBQ Baked Potato, and Veggie Lover's Baked Potato, with all the trimming.

An especially designed pizza menu ideal for sharing features Pure Beach's Pure Pizza, deliciously thin and crispy crusts including Pizza Pepperoni, Margarita, Mojo Verde, and Italiano, with a hearty sausage & mushroom sauce.

You may combine your meal in the restaurant's fun



ing chicken wings, kabob and fried fish fillet tenders. As creative sides, diners will love the Pure Beach Signature Fries, French fries topped with salt, pepper, truffle oil, Parmesan cheese and garlic, mixing French fries with sweet potato fries. Canadian will appreciate the popular O' Canada! Poutine on the menu, along with other options such as Tex-Mex

ambiance with a chilled drink, your pick from a great selection of wines, or a hand crafted cocktail. Best of all, because Pure Beach delivers an open-air lounge, a laidback beachfront bar, and a casual restaurant, go ahead and relax, pick your spot, soak up the warm Aruban sun while enjoying a drink or two, and a snack between frequent dips in the ocean. □



Comedians From the Tonight Show & The David Letterman Show Performing at the Marriott Aruba Resort Throughout This Month!

-Top American standup comedians perform in Ray Ellin's phenomenal show at the Marriott Resort and Stellaris Casino starting February 9th until March 10th.

PALM BEACH - "Aruba Ray's Comedy Show" - named the best show in Aruba - is returning to the Marriott Resort next week, starting Monday February 9th. Advance tickets are available at www.ArubaComedy.com.

This fantastic show, which is the best entertainment option in Aruba, has received rave reviews from both tourists and locals, with it being a fantastic way to spend a night out. The comedians are truly some of the best from New



York, and perform in a relaxed, intimate setting at the Marriott. In addition, there is also an option to purchase a premium four-hour open bar, and each person gets \$10 FREE Slot Play cash with each ticket. The lineup for the first week, from February 9th until

February 16th is FANTASTIC - Dan Naturman, Ray Ellin, and Tony Woods.

Tony Woods is recognized by both his fans and his peers as one of the most engaging comedians in show business. He has toured all over the world, building a large following in the US, UK, Australia, and Europe. Tony has appeared on HBO,

Comedy Central, Showtime, the Conan O'Brien show, NBC's Last Comic Standing, and the film The



Brooklyn Project. Tony recently performed at Radio City Music Hall. Fans know Dan Naturman from his many appearances on the Tonight Show, David Letterman Show, and his special on Comedy Central. Dan was recently a semi-finalist on the hit NBC show America's Got Talent!



RAY ELLIN will be hosting and performing on the shows. Known as "Aruba Ray" because of his passion for Aruba, Ray has been coming to Aruba every month for the past three years, and produces and hosts these incredible comedy shows on the island. He is a popular comedian in New York, and has brought his talent and colleagues to Aruba. Ray has appeared on many

television programs; he is the host of the new Gong Show Live, a resurrection of the classic 70's television show. He also hosted the popular talk show Late Net, and hosted the television shows The Movie Loft, Brain Fuel, and New York Now. He also produced and directed the very successful film The Latin Legends of Comedy, distributed by 20th Century Fox.

The shows are at 830pm, every night, in the Amsterdam Ballroom in the Marriott Resort, down the hall from the casino. Doors open at 8pm.

It is suggested to arrive early - seating is first come first serve. The showroom is intimate - it is suggested you purchase tickets in advance at www.ArubaComedy.com.

You can also purchase tickets at the Amsterdam Ballroom showroom door at 7:30pm. The tickets are \$34. And each Comedy Ticket gives every audience member \$10 in FREE Slot Play in the Stellaris Casino at the Marriott (ID required!). And each Comedy Ticket will also provide a 20% discount to the Aruba La Vista buffet. Plus, audience members can purchase an optional four hour premium open bar for only \$20! The pre-

mium open bar continues after the show in the casino until midnight. An incredible deal, and a full night out.

Ask your concierge for assistance. Additional info: These three comedians perform regularly in New York City's biggest venues. The showroom is very comfortable, but seating is first come first serve! So you should try to arrive early enough.

Drinks are available for purchase, but there is NO drink minimum! Anyone can attend, however the show is suggested for a mature audience. For more information call the Aruba Marriott Resort and Stellaris Casino at 520-6606, or call 749-4363. □



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by the friendly service and great food at Fishes & More Restaurant in the Arawak Garden. "What a beautiful place is this," the four

said when they sat down. Jeff and Cindy haven't been on the island before, for Brad and Sica it is a trip to their 'home



away from home.' They flew down for a good dose of sunshine - they really needed that. And they got what they

came for in abundance. We hope that you will be back again soon, enjoying a great dinner with good friends at Fishes & More. ☐



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"Aruba is a country showing demonstrable progress"

- Joe Biden, Vice President of the United States of America

USA COMMITS TO THE CARIBBEAN; HIGHLIGHTING ARUBA

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Vice President of the United States started the Caribbean Energy Security Summit on Monday, January 26, 2015 by stating that he has been given the authority to move forward on the issue of renewable energy in the Caribbean and that the President of the United States Barack Obama has made it absolutely clear that the Caribbean's energy security are in fact primary issues for the United States. "My dad used to have an expression that said, If everything is equally important to you, nothing is important to you," VP Biden lectured the

audience of 700 delegates. "I guarantee you we will do our part," Biden said. "And we can afford it. But we're not going to waste money. We're going to insist on considerably more transparency, greater coordination and changes in regulations." According to the White House, the United States' Overseas Private Investment Corp. will boost its focus on developing clean energy projects in the Caribbean, and U.S. officials have identified a team designed to identify promising Caribbean energy projects. Biden complimented the Prime Minister of Aruba during his

speech stating that Aruba has found the successful ingredients to renewable energy by uniting government, utilities and private investment behind a common strategy and action plan. Aruba's Prime Minister Mike Eman was introduced during the summit as an expert panelist who brings to the table extraordinary leadership in the areas of renewable energy. Through the vision of Aruba, Prime Minister Eman has pursued an aggressive agenda designed to both revive the economy and simultaneously lead Aruba towards a green future, in which Aruba will reduce its dependency on fossil

fuels and rely on a much higher degree on alternative sources of energy. Aruba has rapidly become a leader in the region in the Caribbean. Prime Minister Eman attributes Aruba's initial successes to the cooperation and inclusion of the utilities in the movement towards renewable energy. The utility companies need to be included and understand their roles in the transformation of conventional energy to sustainable energy. Eman compared it to asking a turkey to make Thanksgiving dinner. VP Biden reminded the sum-

mit delegates that the IMF has made projections about growth in GDP around the world and the United States is projected to be one of those areas of the world that is going to grow, and grow significantly at 3.5 percent or more. "The reason I say this is the combination of that, plus low oil prices, plus the plummeting costs of renewable energy gives us a moment, a window here where we will get significant support from the American public because we are doing better to invest more overseas and overseas is just across the water into the Caribbean," stated VP Biden.

"The Caribbean is "extremely important to us, it is overwhelmingly in the interest of the United States that we get it right and that this relationship changes for the better across the board. The combination of these two issues is paramount to us, equal to anything else we are doing around the world."

- Joe Biden, Vice President of the United States of America.



US VP BIDEN NOTED ARUBA PM EMAN AS A GREAT EXAMPLE FOR THE CARIBBEAN

The First Caribbean Energy Security Summit brought together a unique combination of Caribbean leaders and international energy stakeholders from 36 delegations to discuss solutions for the transformation of conventional energy to sustainable energy.

During the eloquent speech of Vice President Joe Biden, where he spoke on behalf of US President Barack Obama's commitment to the Caribbean, he mentioned Aruba in a very positive

light and complimented Aruba's direction by telling the audience of Caribbean leaders and renewable energy stakeholders, that "Aruba is a country showing demonstrable progress that has been achieved by uniting government, utilities and businesses behind a common strategy and action plan."

Prime Minister Eman had the opportunity to share several of Aruba's recent great strides towards sustainability directly to VP Biden and the other del-

egates. Eman discussed Aruba's desire to not only have 5 star hotels, but to also have 5 star schools, neighborhoods, elderly homes, as well as a 5 star quality of life for citizens. Eman assured the audience that this is obtainable and that like by VP Biden had already said in his speech, Aruba has shown proven progress towards sustainability in reference to renewable energy.

The audience showed great interest in Aruba's commitment to become 100% sustainable

by 2020 and the clear path that has been set to achieve this bold ambition. There are only few countries in the world that have publicly made this 2020 commitment, and Aruba's aspirations are not just to be the first country to do so, but to set an example for other small and large countries to follow. PM Eman was very clear that it is difficult for governments to do this alone, "We have opened the market for private investment in Aruba in the conversion from our conventional

energy systems, which we were spending so much of our hard earned dollars that we could invest in the education of our children and better public health care for our citizens."

Aruba has created Public Private Partnerships to develop projects, including windmill farms, solar parks, and a modern waste-to-energy plant, as a direct result of inviting the private sector to be part of investment opportunities that for governments sometimes are very hard to finance.



PRESIDENT OF CARBON WAR ROOM IMPRESSED WITH VP BIDEN'S COMMENTS ABOUT ARUBA

"I was particularly pleased to hear US Vice President Joe Biden to talk of Aruba's leadership under Prime Minister Eman in shifting towards renewables and moving to a low carbon economy".

"That is the future and I'm glad to see that other countries that attended this summit were actively talking to Prime Minister Eman in terms of learning a lot more about the experience and seeing how they can cooperate and learn from each other," commented Figueres. Figueres explained that this is the opportunity to

reset the relationship between the United States and the Caribbean; as well as an opportunity for the Caribbean to reset its own economic growth based on energy that is cheaper, safer, renewable and of which the Caribbean has in abundance. It does make a tremendous sense for the United States to be supportive of these initiatives, which however have

to be home grown and have to come out of the region as a necessity as their own plans in order to gain full support.

In addressing the summit delegates and Caribbean leaders, Figueres complimented Aruba for achieving much more than other countries in the Caribbean and he continued to un-

derline many of the processes that have already been developed and what is still yet to be accomplished, referring to Aruba as absolutely "state of the art". As president of the Carbon War Room "We have a great interest in other islands seeing what Aruba has done in hopes that they will follow with something similar." The success partnership

between Aruba and the Carbon War Room will continue to work hard this year with one of the Carbon War Room goals being to come online with no less than 6 megawatts of solar panel energy "we have a great potential to complete the first phase this year and then continue to move forward towards 100% sustainability by 2020,"



In this Sept. 11, 2011, file photo, Serena Williams gestures while talking to the chair umpire Eva Asderaki during the women's championship match at the U.S. Open tennis tournament in New York.

Associated Press

Serena Williams to end 14-year boycott at Indian Wells

The Associated Press

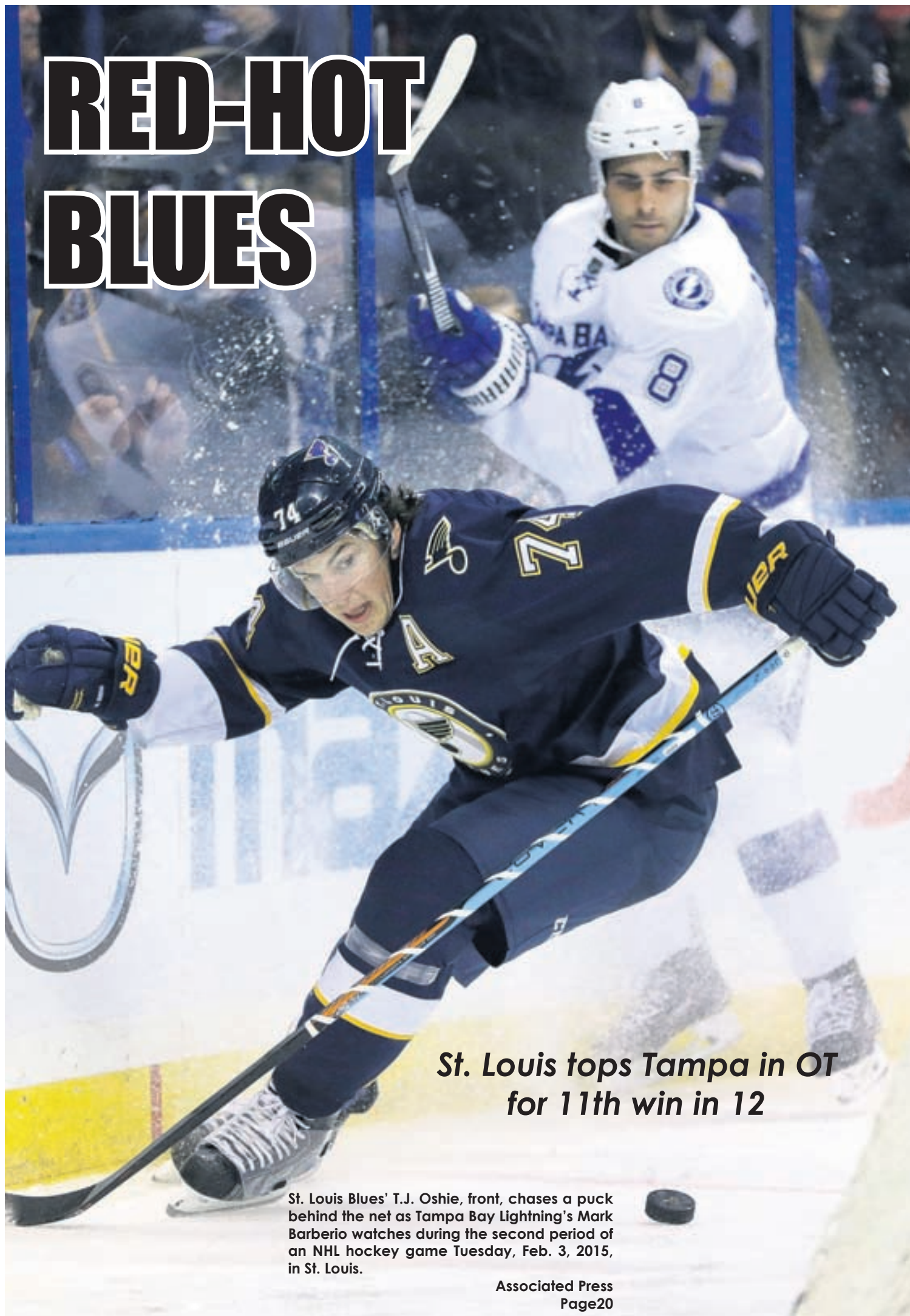
Serena Williams says she will return to play in the tournament at Indian Wells, California, next month after boycotting the event for 14 years.

In a column for Time.com, Williams writes about the jeering and booing and an "undercurrent of racism" she felt during the 2001 semifinal and final.

Williams writes that with "a new understanding of the true meaning of forgiveness, that I will proudly return to Indian Wells in 2015." After older sister Venus withdrew from the '01 semifinal against then 19-year-old Serena with an injury, the crowd booed. Serena wrote that there were allegations that matches between the sisters were fixed. In the final, against Kim Clijsters, the booing continued.

"In a game I loved with all my heart, at one of my most cherished tournaments, I suddenly felt unwelcome, alone and afraid," Serena writes in the column.

The tournament is scheduled for March 11-22. □



St. Louis tops Tampa in OT for 11th win in 12

St. Louis Blues' T.J. Oshie, front, chases a puck behind the net as Tampa Bay Lightning's Mark Barberio watches during the second period of an NHL hockey game Tuesday, Feb. 3, 2015, in St. Louis.

Associated Press
Page20

Sad, solemn Seahawks pack up for offseason

TIM BOOTH

AP Sports Writer

RENTON, Washington (AP)

— When Russell Wilson took the snap with 26 seconds remaining in the Super Bowl, made his read and released the pass, he believed he was on his way to being fitted for a second Super Bowl ring. He never saw the New England Patriots' Malcolm Butler breaking, beating Ricardo Lockette to the pass and creating one of the most infamous plays in Super Bowl history.

"When I threw it, I was like, 'Touchdown, second Super Bowl ring, here we go,'" Wilson said. "And it didn't happen."

The Seattle Seahawks cleaned out their lockers and headed into the offseason in solemn, quiet fashion on Tuesday, two days after their dramatic 28-24 loss to New England. Some players were still at a loss to describe the emo-

tion of Seattle getting to the New England 1-yard line with 26 seconds left, only to see Wilson get intercepted by Butler.

Wilson said he had no doubts about the decision to call for a quick slant to Lockette. Even in hindsight, he said he continues to support the decision to pass on second down from the 1, even though running back Marshawn Lynch had just run for 4 yards on first down.

"It's one of those things, you trust what they called," Wilson said. "I had no doubt. I had no doubt in the play call. I still don't to this day. I just wish we had made the play."

Wilson said when he took the snap, Lockette appeared to be open enough to score. He didn't see Butler breaking hard for the spot where the ball would be delivered.

"He made a great play.



Seattle Seahawks quarterback Russell Wilson talks to reporters outside the locker room at team headquarters, Tuesday, Feb. 3, 2015, in Renton, Wash.

Associated Press

It was one of those bang-bang plays. That's how it usually is in a goal line area, a red zone area,"

Wilson said. "The guy played a great game, honestly. A guy that I think was undrafted just made

tons of plays. Play after play. You've got to give him a lot of respect. He won the game for them right there."

Seattle offensive coordinator Darrell Bevell intimated after the game that Lockette could have gone harder after the ball. The play was also disrupted by New England cornerback Brandon Browner holding up Jermaine Kearse and not allowing any traffic to impede Butler's route to the ball.

Wide receiver Doug Baldwin called Bevell's comments "harsh."

"I would be lying if I said it didn't bother us," Baldwin said. "He's a coach and so you take that criticism or whatnot and you look in the mirror and figure out what you could have done with it. It's harsh. At the end of the day, we're going to stick together and move forward." □

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NHL Capsules

Sabres end record 14-game skid with 3-2 win

The Associated Press

MONTREAL (AP) — Brian Gionta and the Buffalo Sabres ended their 14-game losing streak — the longest in team history — by beating the Montreal Canadiens 3-2 on Tuesday night. Gionta, a former Canadiens captain, capped a three-goal first period for the Sabres (15-33-3), who won three of four meetings with Montreal (32-15-3) this season. Drew Stafford and Matt Moulson also scored for Buffalo.

Brandon Prust and David Desharnais had the goals for the Canadiens, who have lost two in a row at home. Montreal outshot Buffalo 34-18.

The Sabres were three losses short of the NHL record for consecutive defeats set by the 1974-75 Washington Capitals and 1992-93 San Jose Sharks.

PREDATORS 4, MAPLE LEAFS 3

NASHVILLE, Tennessee (AP) — Mike Fisher had a goal and two assists as Nashville handed Toronto its club record-equaling 10th straight loss.

Seth Jones, Shea Weber and Colin Wilson also scored for the Predators, winners of two straight.

Daniel Winnik, Nazem Kadri and Mike Santorelli scored for the Maple Leafs, who are 0-9-1 in their past 10 games.

Wilson got the go-ahead goal at 11:08 of the third.

CAPITALS 4, KINGS 0

WASHINGTON (AP) — Troy Brouwer scored two goals and Braden Holtby stopped 27 shots as Washington beat Los Angeles for its second win in eight games.

Playing in his 500th career game, Brouwer staked the Capitals to a 2-0 lead with a goal in each of the first two periods. It was his first multigoal game of the season and only the third with multiple points.

Nicklas Backstrom made it 3-0 at 5:50 of the third following a Los Angeles turnover, and 59 seconds later Eric Fehr converted another



Washington Capitals defenseman Mike Green (52) is sent airborne by Los Angeles Kings left wing Kyle Clifford (13) during the third period of an NHL hockey game, Tuesday, Feb. 3, 2015, in Washington.

er Kings miscue into a 4-0 advantage.

Holtby, meanwhile, was rarely tested in his sixth shut-out of the season and career-high 24th victory.

The Kings dropped to 1-6-2 on the road since Dec. 11. The defending Stanley Cup champions are 21-17-12 overall after opening the season 6-1-1.

BLUES 2, LIGHTNING 1, OT

ST. LOUIS (AP) — Vladimir Tarasenko leveled the game late in the third period and then Jaden Schwartz scored in overtime to give streaking St. Louis a victory over Tampa Bay.

The Blues (33-13-4) matched a franchise record with points in 12 consecutive games. They have won six straight and are 11-0-1 in their last 12.

St. Louis, which got 30 saves from Brian Elliott, improved to 20-4-2 at home this season.

Eastern Conference-leading Tampa Bay (32-15-5) has struggled on the road this season, going 11-12-3 with four straight defeats.

Lightning rookie Cedric Paquette opened the scoring with his sixth goal in four

games and 11th of the season.

WILD 3, BLACKHAWKS 0

ST. PAUL, Minnesota (AP) — Devan Dubnyk stopped 24 shots in his third shutout since joining Minnesota in mid-January, leading the Wild past Chicago for their fourth straight win.

Mikko Koivu, Jason Zucker and Mikael Granlund scored for the Wild. Since being acquired in a trade with Arizona, Dubnyk is 6-1 with a 1.57 goals-against average. He has four shut-outs overall this season.

The Blackhawks, fourth in the Western Conference, spent the previous two days in Las Vegas and were outshot 43-24. They've been shut out in their last two and haven't won consecutive games in more than a month.

DEVILS 2, SENATORS 1

NEWARK, New Jersey (AP) — Mike Cammalleri scored the go-ahead goal early in the third period as New Jersey extended its best run of the season with a win over Ottawa.

Cory Schneider made 19 saves and Adam Henrique had the other goal for the Devils, who won for the sev-

enth time in 11 games (7-2-2).

Curtis Lazar scored for the Senators and Robin Lehner made 17 saves in his third straight start for injured Craig Anderson.

Jaromir Jagr did most of the work on Cammalleri's team-high 17th goal of the season and seventh game-winner. The big right wing won the puck in the right corner, made a turn into the right circle and found Cammalleri between the circles for a shot over Lehner's shoulder.

CANUCKS 3, JETS 2

VANCOUVER, British Columbia (AP) — Luca Sbisa scored 36 seconds into overtime as the Canucks defeated the Winnipeg Jets.

Alexandre Burrows and Ronalds Kenins scored in regulation for Vancouver. Eddie Lack stopped 26 shots.

Bryan Little and Blake Wheeler had goals for Winnipeg, which got 30 saves from Ondrej Pavelec.

Sbisa took a feed from Radim Vrbata on a 2-on-1 rush and beat Pavelec for his third of the season.

Little's 20th goal came af-

ter Canucks defenseman Alexander Edler's stick broke on an easy clearing attempt with his team down a man at 2:13 of the third. Jets captain Andrew Ladd grabbed the loose puck and quickly found Little, who ripped a shot high over Lack's blocker.

PANTHERS 4, ISLANDERS 2

UNIONDALE, New York (AP) — Jimmy Hayes' second goal of the game 2:10 into the third period lifted slumping Florida over New York.

Hayes put a rebound of Nick Bjugstad's shot past goalie Jaroslav Halak 9 seconds into a power play for his 15th goal. Bjugstad also assisted on Hayes' tying goal in the first.

Erik Gudbranson also scored, Brandon Pirri added one into an empty net and Al Montoya made 32 saves for the Panthers. They are 2-6-1 in their past nine games — including losses at New Jersey and the New York Rangers in their previous two.

Anders Lee scored both goals for the Metropolitan Division-leading Islanders, who have dropped three straight. Halak made 26 saves.

COYOTES 4, BLUE JACKETS 1

COLUMBUS, Ohio (AP) — Oliver Ekman-Larsson and Shane Doan scored power-play goals in the second period, and Mike Smith made 30 saves to lead Arizona over Columbus.

Lucas Lessio also had a goal, and Keith Yandle and Antoine Vermette each had two assists for the Coyotes, who completed a 3-3-2 road trip. Tobias Rieder added an empty-netter.

James Wisniewski scored for Columbus, which has lost three in a row. Anton Forsberg, starting his second NHL game in goal, made 25 saves.

AVALANCHE 3, STARS 2, SO

DALLAS (AP) — Maxime Talbot scored the winner for Colorado in the 11th round of a shootout after Tyson Barrie tied the game in the final minute of regulation against Dallas. □

Warriors ride hot first-half stretch to beat Kings, 121-96



Golden State Warriors forward David Lee, left, and Sacramento Kings center DeMarcus Cousins vie for a rebound during the fourth quarter of an NBA basketball game in Sacramento, Calif., Tuesday, Feb. 3, 2015.

Associated Press

The Associated Press

SACRAMENTO, California (AP) — Stephen Curry had 23 points and nine assists as the Golden State Warriors rode a 23-0 spurt in the first half to beat the Sacramento Kings 121-96 on Tuesday. The Warriors shut down Sacramento for more than seven minutes at the end of the first quarter and start of the second quarter to take an 18-point lead. They went ahead by 20 at the half and 25 in the third quarter before holding off a brief Kings comeback. Andre Iguodala added 17 points, and Marreese Speights finished with 17 points and eight rebounds to help the Warriors sweep the four-game series with Sacramento for the second straight season.

DeMarcus Cousins had 26 points and 11 rebounds, and Rudy Gay scored 20 for the Kings, who rallied within 11 late in the third quarter before the Warriors regrouped.

PISTONS 108, HEAT 91

AUBURN HILLS, Michigan (AP) — D.J. Augustin had 25 points and 13 assists as the Detroit Pistons closed the first quarter on a 25-1 run, going on to beat the

Miami Heat.

Chris Bosh scored 34 points, including 21 in the third quarter, but nobody else provided much help offensively for Miami, which was still without injured star Dwyane Wade. It was the first time in Bosh's five seasons with the Heat that they lost a regular-season game with him scoring at least 30 points. They had been 17-0. Andre Drummond had 14 points and 14 rebounds for the Pistons, and Kentavious Caldwell-Pope scored 18. Greg Monroe had 12 points and nine rebounds.

Detroit is now 2 1/2 games behind Miami and Charlotte, which occupy the last two playoff spots in the Eastern Conference.

CELTICS 108, KNICKS 97

NEW YORK (AP) — Avery Bradley scored 26 points and Jared Sullinger added 22 as the Boston Celtics snapped a three-game losing streak.

Bradley shot 11 for 14 from the field for the Celtics, who rediscovered their offense after a lineup change that put rookie Marcus Smart in the backcourt with Bradley. Smart made consecutive 3-pointers during the Celtics' 14-2 start, and they

never trailed.

Sullinger finished with nine rebounds and six assists. Boston had been limited to just 86.7 points per game during its skid, including a season-low 75 in an eight-point loss to Miami on Sunday.

Carmelo Anthony scored 21 points for the Knicks, who had won five of seven during their best stretch of the season.

76ERS 105, NUGGETS 98

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — Hollis Thompson scored a career-high 23 points to lead the Philadelphia 76ers to the victory over the slumping Denver Nuggets.

Michael Carter-Williams had 15 points, 12 assists and eight rebounds and Robert Covington added 17 points for the improving 76ers, who won their third straight home game for the first time since March 2013. Danilo Gallinari scored 22 points to pace the Nuggets, who dropped their 10th in 11 games.

The 76ers were the laughingstock of the league while starting the season with 17 straight losses. But they have won three of five, with the two losses in competitive games on the

road against Eastern Conference contenders Atlanta and Cleveland. In other NBA games it was Philadelphia 105, Denver

98; Detroit 108, Miami 91; Boston 108, New York 97; Portland 103, Utah 102 and Golden State 121, Sacramento 96. □



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SAT, SUN & HOL 2:10 | 4:20 | 6:30 | 8:35
2D VERSION
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FRI 5:25 | 7:30
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JUPITER ASCENDING
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FRI-SAT 3:50 | 6:35 | 9:20 | 10:45
SUN & HOL 3:50 | 6:35 | 9:20



BEN BARNES | JULIANNE MOORE

SEVENTH SON
MON-THURS 4:50 | 7:10 | 9:30
FRI 4:50 | 7:10 | 9:30 | 11:50
SAT 2:30 | 4:50 | 7:10 | 9:30 | 11:50
SUN & HOL 2:30 | 4:50 | 7:10 | 9:30

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SAT 2:40 | 4:40
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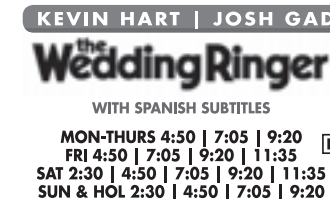
EDDIE REDMAYNE | FELICITY JONES

THE THEORY OF EVERYTHING
MON-THURS 8:30
FRI-SAT 8:30 | 11:10
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Cuban players draw dozens of MLB scouts to Caribbean Series

DANICA COTO

Associated Press

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico (AP) — Major league baseball scouts leaned forward as they steadied their radar guns and trained their video cameras on Cuban players who prepared to bat and pitch during Tuesday's Caribbean Series in Puerto Rico.

It is the first time that top Cuban players are competing in the U.S. territory since Cuba and the U.S. moved to normalize relations, opening up the possibility that a greater number could eventually reach the big leagues. Dozens of scouts traveled to the Caribbean Series almost exclusively to assess Cuban talent, jotting down page after page of statistics and observations on players including star second baseman Yulieski Gourriel.

"We're all excited about the possibility of having the ability to acquire Cuban players more easily now," Matt Slater, director of player personnel for the St. Louis Cardinals, told The Associated Press. "The potential is certainly going to increase the talent level of baseball. It's good for the teams, it's good for the fans and the industry in general."

Cuba returned to the round-robin tournament last year for the first time in 53 years, when it was held



Cuba's Yulieski Gourriel hits the ball during a Caribbean Series baseball game against Mexico, in San Juan, Puerto Rico, Monday, Feb. 2, 2015.

Associated Press

in Venezuela. Cuban players had won the series seven times when it was held from 1949 to 1960 — before they were barred in 1961 from playing professionally overseas. In September 2013, Cuba revised the five-decade ban to allow players to sign offseason contracts with leagues in countries including Japan and Mexico, as long as they return home.

Now, the possibility of being able to play in the major leagues excites many, including Gourriel.

"Of course I would like to play where the best baseball is played," Gourriel said. "As long as we have

permission, we would always be willing."

More than 80 Cuban players have defected since the 1980s, typically to countries other than the U.S. so they can become free agents.

In 2014, 25 Cuban-born players played in the majors, according to STATS, and since 1995, 59 Cuban-born players have made it to the big leagues.

Fans and scouts alike hope to see the number of players increase as relations thaw between the U.S. and Cuba.

"This is the best thing that has happened," said baseball fan Joaquin Rodriguez,

a 58-year-old elevator repairman from Cuba who lives in Puerto Rico. "Players from the Dominican Republic pretty much dominate the major leagues."

It's too early to say what kind of opportunities could open up for Cuban players, but some changes have already taken place. The MLB on Tuesday eliminated its requirement that Cuban players obtain a license from the U.S. government before they are eligible to sign with big league teams. Cuba team manager Alfonso Urquiola said he hopes more negotiations will take place.

"This will be beneficial to us

in all areas, not just baseball," he told the AP.

U.S. Baseball Commissioner Rob Manfred said in an interview last week that there is great interest in Cuban talent even though he wasn't sure clubs were seeking to build more academies in yet another country.

Currently, contracts for six of the top-earning Cuban major league players total close to \$280 million.

"Cuba has a great baseball tradition. It's a great source of talent," Manfred said. "Obviously the president has announced an important policy change. What that means at the nuts-and-bolts level that we operate, we're just not sure yet."

Some fans, including 45-year-old Roberto Tellez, hope that improved relations between the U.S. and Cuba could mean that Cuban athletes might get the opportunity to participate in tournaments other than those played in Latin America. Cuban-born Tellez lives in Miami but traveled to Puerto Rico with his wife to cheer for Cuba.

He said his dream is to see both Cuban players who live on the island and in the U.S. form one team for the next baseball classic.

"That would be so exciting, for them to represent the country and not politics," he said. □



In this Nov. 13, 2014, file photo former PGA golfer Charlie Sifford talks during an interview at his home in Brecksville, Ohio. Associated Press

DOUG FERGUSON
AP Golf Writer

Charlie Sifford, who only wanted a chance to play

Charlie Sifford, first black on PGA Tour dies

and broke the color barrier in golf as the first PGA Tour member, died Tuesday night, the PGA of America said.

Sifford, who recently had suffered a stroke, was 92. Details of his death and funeral arrangements were not immediately available. PGA of America President Derek Sprague called Sifford "an uncommon and faithful servant."

"His love of golf, despite many barriers in his path, strengthened him as he became a beacon for diversity in our game," Sprague said. "By his courage, Dr. Sifford inspired others to follow their dreams. Golf was

fortunate to have had this exceptional American in our midst."

A proud man who endured racial taunts and threats, Sifford set modest goals and achieved more than he imagined.

Sifford challenged the Caucasian-only clause and the PGA rescinded it in 1961. He won the Greater Hartford Open in 1967 and the Los Angeles Open in 1969. He also won the 1975 Senior PGA Championship, five years before the Champions Tour was created.

His career was fully recognized in 2004 when he became the first black inducted into the World Golf Hall

of Fame. Last November, President Barack Obama presented him with the Presidential Medal of Freedom. Jack Nicklaus and Arnold Palmer are the only other golfers who received that honor.

"Charlie won tournaments, but more important, he broke a barrier," Nicklaus once said.

"I think what Charlie Sifford has brought to his game has been monumental."

The one goal that eluded him was a chance to play in the Masters, which did not invite its first black player until Lee Elder in 1975. Sifford remained bitter, though the pain was eased

when Tiger Woods won the first of his four green jackets in 1997.

Woods often has said he would not have played golf if not for Sifford and other black pioneers.

"It's not an exaggeration to say that without Charlie, and the other pioneers who fought to play, I may not be playing golf," Woods said in an email to The Associated Press late last year.

"My pop likely wouldn't have picked up the sport, and maybe I wouldn't have either."

The road was never easy. Sifford was born on June 22, 1922 in Charlotte, North Carolina. □

The Fine Print: Unlimited data plans have limits

ANICK JESDANUN

AP Technology Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — With cellular-data plans, unlimited doesn't really mean unlimited. Some carriers threaten to slow down speeds after heavy use or curb how much you can stray from their own networks.

So I wasn't surprised to learn that the nation's largest prepaid wireless company, TracFone Wireless, had similar restrictions on its unlimited data plans. TracFone, whose service is sold under such brands as Straight Talk, Net10, Simple Mobile and Telcel America, agreed last week to pay \$40 million in refunds. The Federal Trade Commission said TracFone didn't clearly tell customers about those restrictions.

So how unlimited is your plan? Here's a look at the fine print of the four biggest carriers.

(Note: This comparison is mainly for traditional contract and other "postpaid" plans. Prices and rules for prepaid plans may differ. Restrictions also don't apply to Wi-Fi data.)

T-MOBILE

Technically, most T-Mobile plans are unlimited. But once you hit a certain threshold on its faster, 4G LTE network, T-Mobile will cut your speed to 128 kilobits per second — about twice the speed of dial-up modems, for those who remember them. You'll get back to the fast lane when the next billing cycle starts. For truly unlimited data, get the Unlimited 4G LTE package for \$80 a month. That includes unlimited voice and text. For family plans, a second unlimited line is \$60 and each one after that is \$40 per month. T-Mobile says speeds won't get reduced, but there's still a catch: You get unlimited data only on T-Mobile's own network.

Like other carriers, T-Mobile has roaming agreements with rivals, so you might actually be using AT&T's network, for instance, where

T-Mobile lacks coverage. T-Mobile has to pay AT&T in that case, so it limits how much you can roam. Unlimited customers who hit 50 megabytes of U.S. data roaming in a given month — less than seven minutes of streaming video by T-Mobile's calculations — won't have data service until they are back on T-Mobile's network.

Unlike its major rivals, T-Mobile offers free data roaming on some plans when traveling in more than 100 countries. It's unlimited, but those who spend extended periods out of the country won't be eligible. Speeds are slow, at about 128 kilobits per second. You need to pay extra for faster speeds abroad.

SPRINT

Sprint offers an unlimited voice, text and data package for \$60 a month. On family plans, each additional line is \$40. Regardless of whether a plan is unlimited or capped, Sprint may slow down speeds for the heaviest 5 percent of data users when the network is congested. That typically covers those who use 5 gigabytes or more a month, or about seven hours of medium-quality video on Netflix.

On unlimited plans, domestic roaming is capped at 100 megabytes. After that, according to the fine print, "Sprint reserves the right, without notice, to deny, terminate, modify, disconnect or suspend service." Yikes. Sprint said in an email that it will offer warnings and a grace period before any service suspension. International roaming is always charged.

AT&T and VERIZON

AT&T stopped offering unlimited data plans to new customers in 2010, and Verizon did so in 2012. Existing customers were allowed to keep it. Both companies slow down service for heavy users.

For AT&T customers with

4G LTE phones (which the latest phones typically are) the threshold is 5 gigabytes. After that, speed slows until the next billing cycle. For 3G and non-LTE 4G phones, the threshold is 3 gigabytes. However, speeds are only reduced in areas where there is network congestion. AT&T plans to bring that policy to 4G LTE phones, too, later this year.

Verizon slows its heaviest users — the top 5 percent — when they have a 3G device and are in a congested area. It announced plans to extend that restriction to 4G users last October, but backed down following complaints.

With both companies, the policy that applies depends on the type of phone you have, not the network you're on.

AT&T and Verizon say they don't limit roaming in the U.S. Their networks are more extensive than T-Mobile's or Sprint's, reducing the need to roam. International roaming always costs extra. □



FILE - This April 11, 2011 file photo shows a sign for Verizon, AT&T, and Sprint mobile phones at a Best Buy store in San Francisco. Associated Press

China has 649 million people online, less are microblogging

BEIJING (AP) — Already the world's largest, China's online population grew last year but drifted away from Twitter-like microblogs, with the number of microblog users falling by 32 million. The decline shows that Chinese microblogging sites have failed to recover from a major setback in 2013 when a harsh government crackdown on speech chilled discussion on those sites and drove away tens of millions of users. The second-year drop was accompanied by a rapid growth in popularity of newer products, especially the instant messaging service WeChat.

In an annual report released Tuesday, the government-backed China Internet Network Information Center said China's online population reached

649 million last year and that 557 million of them accessed the Internet via mobile devices.

But microblog users dropped by 7.1 percent to 249 million, and Internet companies pulled back investments in microblogging services, the report said. In comparison, the number of users of mobile instant messaging services grew 17.8 percent to 508 million, the report said.

Dominating this market in China is WeChat, a product of the Internet company Tencent that also allows users to share information among circles of friends, make online payments, play games, or distribute content in public accounts that can be followed by other users. While Chinese authorities were broadsided by the explosive growth

of microblogs before 2012 and felt threatened by their ability to disseminate unfiltered information, they have largely been able to manage discussions on WeChat since its 2011 launch. Popular foreign social media sites such as Twitter, Facebook, and video-sharing site YouTube are blocked in China.

Most recently, Beijing has restricted access to Google services and disrupted some virtual private networks that would have allowed users to circumvent controls on banned sites. Chinese authorities have introduced the concept of "Internet sovereignty" to claim that each country has the right to control online material within its borders. □

Merck posts spike in 4Q profit, beats forecasts

LINDA A. JOHNSON
AP Business Writer

Drugmaker Merck & Co.'s fourth-quarter profit skyrocketed to \$7.32 billion, skewed by an \$11.2 billion gain from selling its consumer health business to Germany's Bayer AG. Merck, the maker of blockbuster diabetes pill Januvia, edged past Wall Street expectations, despite hits to revenue from multiple divestitures, patent expirations and the strong dollar, but its 2015 forecast

missed Wall Street expectations. Merck shares dropped 4 percent, or \$2.41, to \$58.61 in morning trading. The company expects to soon launch six products approved in the U.S. in 2014 — the most Merck's ever had in one year. Those are Keytruda for advanced skin cancer, insomnia drug Belsomra, allergy treatments Grastek and Ragwitek, blood thinner Zontivity and an improved version of its vaccine against cancer-

causing HPV, Gardasil. The drugmaker began yet another restructuring in 2013, this one including not just staff cuts and site closures to save money, but jettisoning the \$1.9 billion-a-year consumer health business that sells Claritin allergy pills and Coppertone sun care items. Merck has been sharpening its focus, emphasizing four areas — diabetes, hospital and acute care, cancer and vaccines. It just bought

antibiotics maker Cubist Pharmaceuticals for \$9.5 billion and was rewarded with the recent approval of Cubist's Zerbaxa, for serious and resistant bacterial infections. Merck, the world's fourth-biggest drugmaker by revenue, on Wednesday predicted adjusted 2015 profit of \$3.32 to \$3.47 per share, below the \$3.50 analysts expected. Merck anticipates revenue of \$38.3 billion to \$39.8 billion; analysts anticipated \$40.46 billion. □

Sony trims its loss forecast to \$1.4 billion

E. KURTENBACH
AP Business Writer

TOKYO (AP) — Sony Corp. trimmed its forecast of losses and gave a figure for damages from the Sony Pictures hack, but said it would suffer no significant harm from the cyberattack in the long run. The entertainment and electronics giant delayed the announcement of its earnings for the October-December quarter because the hack affected its ability to compile its complete results in time.

The hack, which became public in December when the Hollywood studio's computers were crippled and sensitive documents were posted online, cost Sony about \$15 million, it said.

"We don't expect leaks of unreleased films online or damage to our IT systems will cause a significant loss," Kazuhiko Takeda, vice president of Sony's corporate planning department, told reporters. "We had insurance against cyberattacks and will be able to recover a significant portion of the costs."

Sony issued new earnings forecasts for the fiscal year ending in March and said it was benefiting from strong sales of the PlayStation 4, other devices and network services.

The company is forecasting a loss of 170 billion yen (\$1.4 billion) for the fiscal year, an improvement from a forecast made in October of a 230 billion yen loss. The company reported a 40 billion yen loss last fiscal year, which was the latest in a succession of losses as its TV business lost ground to cheaper competitors.

Hackers attacked Sony Pictures over its movie "The Interview," which spoofs an assassination of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, and leaked tens of thousands of emails.

The studio first suspended the movie's Christmas release, citing the concerns of cinema chains over threats of terrorist attacks, but later went ahead with it. The movie made at least \$15 million from more than 2 million digital rentals and purchases in its first four days. □

US stock indexes mostly fall as oil plunges again

MATTHEW CRAFT
AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — The stock market ended an uncertain day mostly lower after the price of oil took another plunge. Stronger profits at Disney pushed its stock higher, giving the Dow Jones industrial average a small lift. Major indexes headed low-

Terry Sandven, senior equity strategist at U.S. Bank Wealth Management. "You see that in the split personality of the market." The Standard & Poor's 500 index fell 8.52 points, or 0.4 percent, to 2,041.51. The Dow edged up 6.62 points, less than 0.1 percent, to 17,673.02 and the Nasdaq sank 11.03 points,

ney reported that strong results from theme parks, television channels and selling merchandise tied to its "Frozen" movie drove quarterly earnings up 19 percent. Disney's profit and revenue trounced Wall Street's estimates for the quarter, and its stock surged \$7.18, or 8 percent, to \$101.28, an all-time high.

more to open new stores while revenue stayed nearly flat, held back by a stronger dollar.

The fourth-quarter earnings season now looks better than it did just two weeks ago. Nearly three out of four big companies have turned in higher profits than analysts had expected, putting overall earnings on track to rise nearly 7 percent for the quarter, according to S&P Capital IQ. Two weeks ago, the expected increase was just 4 percent.

A recent rebound in oil prices fizzled out Wednesday as the benchmark contract for U.S. crude fell \$4.60, or 8.7 percent, to settle at \$48.45 a barrel in New York. The drop came after the U.S. government reported an increase in crude inventories last week. Oil had rallied over the previous four days as traders speculated that low prices would force more energy companies to curtail exploration and production. Brent crude, a benchmark for international oils used by many U.S. refineries, declined \$3.75, or 6.5 percent, to close at \$54.16 a barrel in London.

Major markets in Europe ended mixed. France's CAC 40 rose 0.4 percent and Germany's DAX edged up 0.2 percent. Britain's FTSE 100 closed with a loss of 0.2 percent.

In the U.S., Staples announced that it's buying Office Depot for \$6 billion in a widely anticipated merger of the two largest office supply retailers. □



Trader Jeffrey Lucchesi, right, works in a booth on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange. The stock market ended an uncertain day mostly lower after the price of oil took another plunge.

(AP Photo/Richard Drew)

er at the opening bell, as a drop in crude oil tugged energy stocks down. The Standard & Poor's 500 index recovered its losses by midday, meandered through the afternoon, then swung from a solid gain to a slight loss in the final hour of trading.

"I think there's a sense of uneasiness and lack of conviction among investors right now," said

or 0.2 percent, to 4,716.70. Over the previous six trading days, the market turned in three gains and three losses. Sandven said rising uncertainty over corporate earnings has helped drive the volatility. Falling oil prices and a stronger dollar have pinched companies' profits, forcing investors to second-guess their expectations.

Late Tuesday, Walt Dis-

ney reported that strong results from theme parks, television channels and selling merchandise tied to its "Frozen" movie drove quarterly earnings up 19 percent. Disney's profit and revenue trounced Wall Street's estimates for the quarter, and its stock surged \$7.18, or 8 percent, to \$101.28, an all-time high.

Bob Iger, Disney's CEO, said the company was not seeing a hit to attendance from the measles outbreak linked last month to Disney's Southern California parks. Ralph Lauren's stock lost \$31.12, or 18 percent, to \$139.71, after the retailer reported a drop in quarterly earnings and slashed its sales forecast for the full year. The company spent

GM 2014 profit falls 26 percent to \$2.8B on recall costs

TOM KRISHER
AP Auto Writer

DETROIT (AP) — If it weren't for the recalls, 2014 would have been a stellar year for General Motors. Even with \$2.8 billion in pretax costs to fix more than 30 million recalled vehicles and \$400 million set aside for death and injury claims, GM still managed to turn a \$2.8 billion profit. The company even raised its quarterly dividend. That's because otherwise, most of the stars lined up well for the De-

troit automaker. Gas prices dropped more than a buck to \$2.26 per gallon. The U.S. economy gained steam. Cheap credit was abundant. Combined, they sent buyers to GM's newly redesigned and lucrative pickup trucks and large SUVs in North America, the company's most profitable market. At the same time, chief competitor Ford's truck plants were down much of the year while it switched to a new pickup with a risky aluminum body. Sales in

China grew faster than the market. Worldwide sales were up 2 percent to 9.9 million vehicles, a record. Things were so good, GM decided to increase its dividend next quarter by 20 percent, to 36 cents, pending board approval. Yes, there was trouble in Europe, Russia and South America, but by and large, GM had a good year. Investors agreed. Its shares rose 4.7 percent in midday trading Wednesday. Net income fell 26 percent

from \$3.8 billion in 2013, but GM's full-year earnings amounted to \$1.65 per share. Excluding one-time items, the company earned \$3.05 per share, beating Wall Street's expectation of \$2.64, according to FactSet. Revenue rose slightly to \$155.9 billion, beating the analysts' prediction of \$150.6 billion. "We're really going to carry the positive momentum into 2015," Chief Financial Officer Chuck Stevens said. "We expect both aggre-

gate earnings and profit margins to improve in all of our automotive regions." Stevens said earnings were strong when recall costs aren't counted. The company earned \$6.5 billion before interest and taxes last year, and that would have been more than \$9 billion without the recalls, he said. Legal expenses rose by more than \$300 million, and that's expected to continue in 2015. Overall, the recalls cost GM \$1.10 per share. □

Staples buys Office Depot for \$6B to keep pace with change

MICHELLE CHAPMAN
AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — There are few places where evolving technology has been more disruptive than in the work place, which played out again Wednesday as Staples announced it would spend about \$6 billion to buy Office Depot.

Once one-time rivals will no longer compete in close proximity for the same customers, instead putting up a front of 4,000 stores to hold off encroachments from the likes of Wal-Mart, Target and Amazon.com. Annual sales of the new office-supply giant are expected to approach \$39 billion.

The two companies tried to combine forces before but were successfully blocked by anti-trust regulators. That was almost 20 years ago, however, and with the boards of both companies signing on unanimously to try it again,

they appear confident that their landscape has changed substantially.

"This is a transformational acquisition which enables Staples to provide more value to customers, and more effectively compete in a rapidly evolving competitive environment," said Staples CEO and Chairman Ron Sargent.

Big wholesalers and office supply manufacturers that will have one less company to sell products to may see it differently,

said Citi Investment Research's Kate McShane.

It was slightly more than a year ago that Office Depot merged with OfficeMax for much the same reason. And it is the nod from regulators on that \$1.2 billion deal in late 2013 that may be giving the companies more confidence that they now see things from their perspective.

Sargent said Wednesday that while they do not know



This photo shows an Office Depot store on in New York. Staples on Wednesday, Feb. 4, 2015 announced it is buying Office Depot in a cash-and-stock deal valued at nearly \$6 billion.

(AP Photo/Mark Lennihan)

how the Federal Trade Commission will react, a lot has changed.

When the FTC closed its investigation into the merger of Office Depot and OfficeMax it seemed to agree, saying that the market for the sale of consumable of-

fice supplies had changed significantly.

Staples did touch on some of those monopoly issues Wednesday, saying that it's not required to close the deal with Office Depot if antitrust authorities require divestitures

that deliver more than \$1.25 billion of Office Depot's 2014 revenues in the U.S. or if a requirement of the antitrust authorities has a material adverse effect on Office Depot's operations outside of the U.S. □

Toyota raises forecast after quarterly profit up on weak yen

YURI KAGEYAMA
AP Business Writer

TOKYO (AP) — Toyota Motor Corp., the world's No. 1 automaker, raised its earnings forecast Wednesday after third quarter profit jumped 14 percent, boosted by a weak yen.

Toyota reported a better-than-expected 600 billion yen (\$5.1 billion) profit for the three months through December. Quarterly sales of 7.17 trillion yen (\$61 billion) were up 9 percent

year-on-year.

Analysts surveyed by FactSet had forecast a quarterly profit of 540 billion yen (\$4.6 billion).

The Japanese automaker, which makes the Camry sedan, Prius hybrid and Lexus luxury model, expects a profit of 2.13 trillion yen (\$18 billion) for the fiscal year through March, up nearly 17 percent from the previous year. It had previously projected a 2 trillion yen (\$17 billion) profit.

Toyota has held the top spot in global vehicle sales for three years straight, selling 10.23 million vehicles last year, beating Volkswagen AG of Germany and U.S. rival General Motors Co. Toyota's bottom line has gotten a lift from the cheap yen, although Managing Officer Taku Sasaki also credited cost cuts.

The dollar averaged about 114 yen for the fiscal third quarter, while it cost 100 yen the same period the

previous year. It has risen to about 118 yen recently.

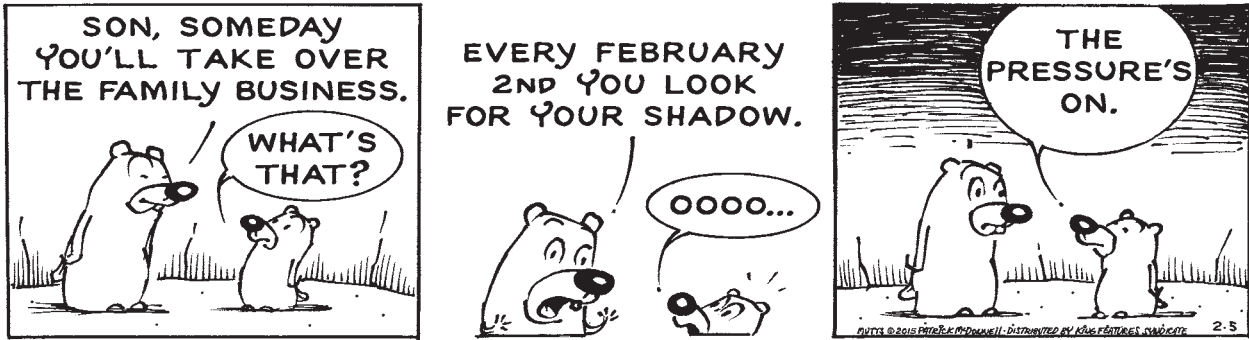
Toyota said it added 145 billion yen (\$1.2 billion) to its quarterly operating profit from the foreign exchange rate, while gaining 80 billion yen (\$680 million) from cost cuts.

The latest results show Toyota in robust financial health as it embarks on renewed growth, after putting such ambitions on hold during serious setbacks suffered over a massive recall scan-

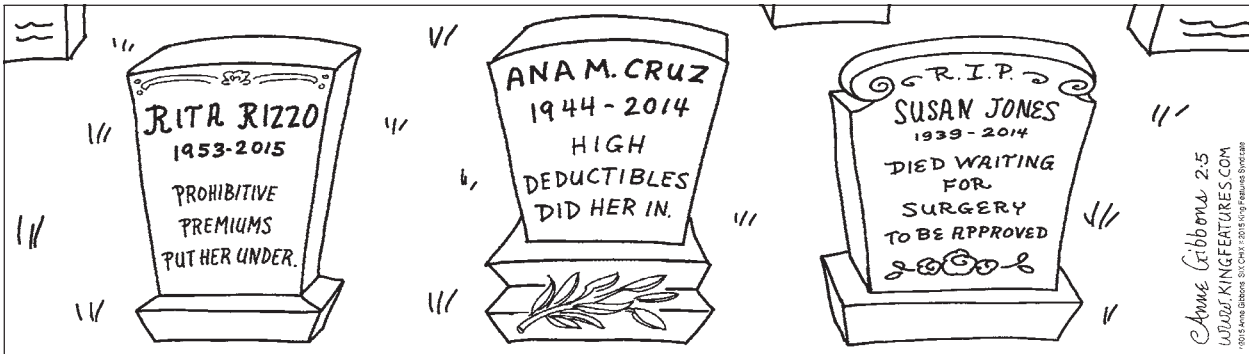
dal, fines from U.S. authorities and many lawsuits, especially in the U.S. since 2009. In Minneapolis on Tuesday, a U.S. federal jury decided the design of the 1996 Toyota Camry had a dangerous defect that was partly to blame for a fatal 2006 crash, and ordered Toyota to pay nearly \$11 million to victims.

But Toyota's global brand has largely recovered the recall crisis and U.S. sales have been doing well. □

Mutts



6 Chix



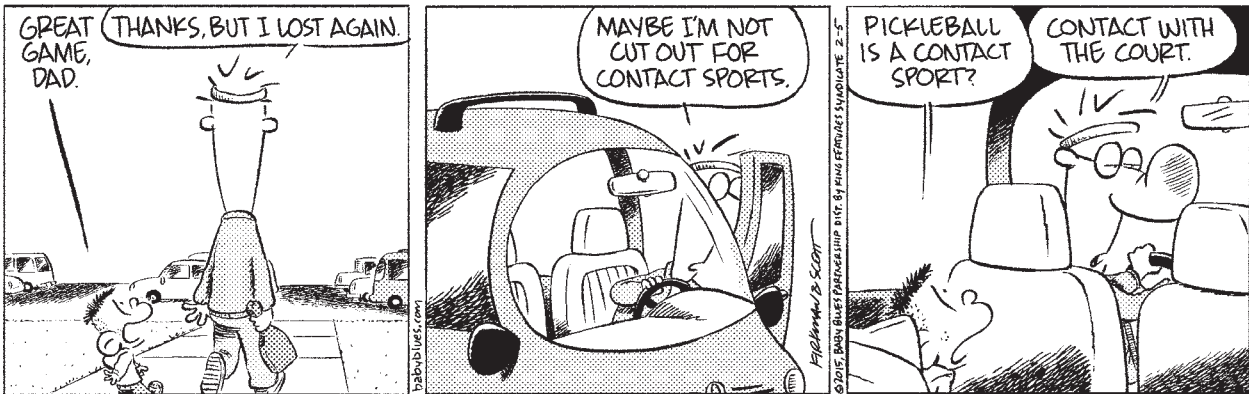
Blondie



Mother Goose & Grimm



Baby Blues



Zits



Conceptis Sudoku

9				5				3
			8		6			
		6			3	5		
	8	9					6	
5			7		4			1
	3					7	2	
		1	4			9		
			2		9			
6				7				4

Difficulty Level ★★★

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Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Sunday.

1	6	7	4	2	5	8	9	3
4	5	9	6	3	8	2	1	7
8	3	2	1	7	9	5	6	4
7	9	6	3	1	2	4	8	5
3	1	4	8	5	6	7	2	9
5	2	8	7	9	4	1	3	6
9	7	3	2	4	1	6	5	8
6	4	1	5	8	3	9	7	2
2	8	5	9	6	7	3	4	1

ACROSS

- 1 Little children
- 5 Plank
- 10 Burn slightly
- 14 "Cat on ___ Tin Roof"
- 15 External
- 16 Leaf-gathering tool
- 17 Deep mud
- 18 Actress Garbo
- 19 Ending for an inflammation
- 20 Calms; comforts
- 22 Disease
- 24 "You can ___ that again!"
- 25 ___ sign; symbol in subtraction
- 26 Train station
- 29 Brooch
- 30 Snouts
- 34 Wrought-___ fence
- 35 Forbid
- 36 Supervise
- 37 Noah's boat
- 38 Corpse
- 40 Misses ___ mile; isn't even close
- 41 Had to have
- 43 Galloped
- 44 Didn't discard
- 45 Found a sum
- 46 ___ up; arrange
- 47 Pub game
- 48 ___ four; dainty pastry
- 50 Sing without moving the lips
- 51 Asian temples
- 54 Pollywog
- 58 Astounds
- 59 Speak
- 61 Primates
- 62 Walking stick
- 63 Bookish fellows
- 64 Jump
- 65 Observed
- 66 Garbage
- 67 Mr. Warhol

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14				15					16			
17				18					19			
20				21			22		23			
24				25								
26	27	28		29			30		31	32	33	
34				35			36					
37				38			39			40		
41				42			43			44		
45				46			47					
48				49			50					
51	52	53					54			55	56	57
58				59		60			61			
62				63			64					
65				66			67					

Created by Jacqueline E. Mathews

2/5/15

Wednesday's Puzzle Solved

BATES	PODS	SHIN
AGONY	EXIT	HONE
BEERS	KENO	OUTS
ADDITION	CLOSET	
CEDE	SKATERS	
ASTHMA	HASTE	
CAR	SHOAL	ERECT
TIER	OUT OF	SALE
SLEEP	SENIOR	DUE
PANTS	CEASES	
PEGASUS	CHALS	
ENLIST	COLESLAW	
AJAR	MEAL	NAIVE
CODE	EARL	TIMID
EYED	GREY	SLEDS

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2/5/15

- 42 Removed from office
- 52 Run ___; flee
- 44 Capital of Uganda
- 53 Cowboy Autry
- 46 Nun's title
- 54 Koppel and Knight
- 47 Failure
- 55 Ajar
- 49 Jeer at
- 56 Pencil's center
- 50 Severe
- 57 Notice
- 51 ___ oneself; work steadily
- 60 Refrain syllable

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Virgin Galactic gets back on track toward space tourism SUSAN

MONTOYA BRYAN
Associated Press

UPHAM, New Mexico (AP)

— The only thing interrupting the creosote and mesquite that make up one of New Mexico's most remote stretches of desert is a pristine runway where Virgin Galactic plans one day to launch the world's first commercial space-line.

In the four years since its completion, however, the runway has seen little use. No constant roar of jet engines. No screeches from landing gear. Just promises, year after year, that it would shuttle paying passengers to the edges of Earth.

Virgin Galactic had proclaimed 2015 was finally going to be the year. That was until the company's rocket-powered spacecraft broke apart over California's Mojave Desert during a test flight last fall, killing one pilot and igniting speculation about the future of commercial space tourism and Spaceport America.

Virgin Galactic CEO



In this Tuesday, Dec. 9, 2014 photo, Christine Anderson, executive director of the New Mexico Spaceport Authority, poses for a photo at the end of the taxiway at Spaceport America in Upham, N.M.

George Whitesides said things are on track now and testing will take off again this year.

"I really think we're turning the corner," Whitesides said. "We've gone through one of the toughest things a company can go through and we're still standing, and now we're really mov-

ing forward with pace." He said the company and its investors aren't backing down from the goal of making space accessible. Virgin Galactic's manufacturing crew is about two-thirds done with building a new spacecraft, and the operations team is ramping up for a test-flight program that will serve as one of the last major hurdles to getting off the ground.

"Our company has spent a lot of time and money to get to the point where we can carry out successful commercial operations at Spaceport America. We're still committed," he said. Whitesides has always been reluctant to attach a timeline to the milestones the company needs to reach, but he's certain test flights will resume later this year. That's what New Mexico taxpayers want to hear. They've already funneled nearly a quarter of a billion dollars into the world's first purpose-built space-

port, and state lawmakers are being asked for nearly \$2 million more this year to make up for the lost fees stemming from the delay in Virgin Galactic's commercial flights.

Some lawmakers have called for pulling the plug, adding fuel to criticisms that the project — first initiated by former Gov. Bill Richardson, a Democrat, and British billionaire Richard Branson — is a boondoggle. Others, including Republican Gov. Susana Martinez's administration, say the state has a chance to carve out a new niche for economic development and position itself on the front end of space tourism. New Mexico has struggled to rebound from the recession, creating only 14,000 jobs over the past year while neighboring states have bounced back to 2008 employment levels. Whitesides visited Spaceport America in December.

The runway was quiet, but workers inside the massive, futuristic hangar continued to outfit it for the day Virgin Galactic opens.

"I really think we're on the edge of something truly incredible, which is enabling people and students to experience space, whether going themselves or sending their experiments," he said. Christine Anderson, the head of New Mexico's Spaceport Authority, pointed to the ill-fated Apollo 1 launch rehearsal and the 1986 Challenger explosion as examples of space exploration efforts that resulted in tragedy. Still, astronauts and scientists pushed on, and she said those backing Virgin Galactic and Spaceport America are doing the same.

"We have invested \$218 million, so there's absolutely no reason to stop now," she said.

Virgin Galactic continues to pay its lease, and more money will come from lease and user fees related to the testing scheduled to begin this spring for a reusable rocket being developed by Elon Musk's SpaceX. But Anderson acknowledged that the spaceport needs to entice more tenants and host other events, including fashion and auto photo shoots, conferences and more rocket launches by companies such as UP Aerospace. □

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Wal-Mart driver loses bid to delay Tracy Morgan crash suit

DAVID PORTER
Associated Press

NEWARK, N.J. (AP) — A federal judge has ruled against a Wal-Mart driver involved in a crash that killed a comic and severely injured actor-comedian Tracy Morgan and several others.

Driver Kevin Roper had filed a motion to delay Morgan's lawsuit against Bentonville, Arkansas-based Wal-Mart stemming from the June 7 crash in New Jersey.

Roper faces several criminal charges in state court, including death by auto, but he hasn't been indicted yet. He's not a defendant in Morgan's federal lawsuit but wanted to intervene in that suit and delay it from moving forward until his criminal case could be resolved.

Roper, of Jonesboro, Georgia, said his right to a fair trial would be hampered and that he would, in effect, be on trial in the civil case even though he wasn't a defendant. He said prosecutors in the criminal case would benefit from information that was divulged.

On Tuesday, a judge ruled against Roper and allowed the lawsuit to proceed.

U.S. District Judge Michael Shipp wrote that a delay would unfairly affect the parties in Morgan's suit and that Roper didn't cite relevant case law to back up his claims or give specific examples of how he would be adversely affected. He did give Roper the option to file another motion if information or materials are requested from him for the lawsuit while his criminal case is unresolved.

Comedian James McNair was killed in the crash on the New Jersey Turnpike, while Morgan and two others were seriously injured. □

How much is too much television?

DAVID BAUDER

AP Television Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Beth Hoppe loves television dramas. Yet even with a digital video recorder and on-demand services that enable her to watch on her own schedule, there's not enough time to see everything on her list.

As the chief programmer for PBS, Hoppe has a business reason to stay current. So if she's feeling overwhelmed, how can the rest of us keep up?

For all of the changes in television, none is more profound than the sheer volume of material available now. From NBC's "About a Boy" to Syfy's "Z Nation," there were 352 original scripted series shown in 2014 on broadcast, cable and streaming services. That doesn't count news, sports, talk shows, documentaries, movies or reality shows.

In the U.S., there were 26 original scripted series on cable in prime time and late night in 1999, and 199 last year — an increase of 665 percent.

An additional 25 series were offered in 2014 on Netflix, Amazon or Hulu, services that didn't exist as original programmers 15 years ago.

The pace is only accelerating: the number of original cable prime-time series alone has essentially doubled since 2010, according to the FX networks,



This image released by Fox shows Taraji P. Henson, as Cookie, in a scene from "Empire," an original scripted series airing on the Fox network.

Associated Press

which keeps count of the programs.

"The amount of competition is just literally insane," said John Landgraf, FX chief executive.

Cable networks could once run a successful business by showing primarily movies and reruns of old broadcast shows. "That's over," Hoppe said.

Viewers now can order an old movie whenever they want through a streaming service and not wait for a network to air it, said Alan Wurtzel, chief researcher at NBC Universal. Despite occasional successes like "The Big Bang Theory," the taste for past-season network reruns is also fading,

in large part because of all the fresh material available. Many reruns, too, can be ordered online for binge watching.

Distinctiveness is crucial now. Networks need shows of their own to establish identities. What was AMC before "Mad Men"? IFC before "Portlandia"? FX before "Rescue Me"?

"People won't become Lifetime fans because it ran 'Golden Girls' for a while," said Tim Brooks, author of "The Complete Directory to Prime Time Network and Cable TV Shows." "But when you produce original shows, especially ones that pop, they come back to the network looking for the

next premiere."

Brooks and co-author Earle Marsh updated their book for a ninth edition in 2007. No more, though. There are just too many shows.

Maybe there will be a saturation point, but it clearly isn't evident. The market doesn't really punish failure, Landgraf said. Unsuccessful shows disappear, but networks rarely do.

For viewers, there's almost never a lull period. There's a series premiere, or season premiere, seemingly every week. All of the action makes true out-of-the-box hits, like Fox has achieved with "Empire" the past few weeks, more and more rare. □

'Kim Kardashian' game maker Glu creating Katy Perry game

NEW YORK (AP) — Glu Mobile, the developer of the popular "Kim Kardashian: Hollywood" game, said it will develop a new mobile game with singer Katy Perry.

The San Francisco company said Wednesday that the game will include Perry's voice and likeness. It plans to launch the game in late 2015 on Apple and Android mobile devices.

The Kim Kardashian game,

which also features the reality TV star's voice and likeness, has been a big hit for Glu. The company on Wednesday reported \$74.3 million in adjusted revenue from the game in 2014 — its biggest seller by far, although sales slowed in the fourth quarter from the third quarter.

Perry has nine No. 1 hits on the Billboard Hot 100 chart, including "I Kissed a Girl" and "Roar." She performed



In this Feb. 1, 2015 photo, singer Katy Perry performs during half-time of Super Bowl XLIX in Glendale, Ariz.

Associated Press

at the Super Bowl on Sunday.

Glu Mobile Inc. also raised its guidance for 2015 on

Wednesday.

Its shares rose 13 percent to \$4.35 in aftermarket trading. □

Azalea & Smith lead iHeartRadio Award nominees



NEW YORK (AP) — Iggy Azalea and Sam Smith led the finalists for the 2015 iHeartRadio Music Awards with five nominations apiece, with Taylor Swift and Ariana Grande each receiving four nominations. iHeartMedia and NBC announced the nominations Wednesday. The awards will be presented March 29 at the Shrine Auditorium in Los Angeles. The event will be televised live on NBC and air simultaneously on

iHeartMedia stations and across the network's digital music platform. Swift, Azalea, Grande, Smith and Luke Bryan are nominated for artist of the year. Best new artist nominees include Azalea, Smith, Bastille, Cole Swindell and Meghan Trainor. Other categories include song of the year and best collaboration. Fans can vote for three awards, including best lyrics. □

Bobbi Kristina talked about husband, dad says she never wed



In this Aug. 16, 2012, file photo, Bobbi Kristina Brown, left, and Nick Gordon attend the Los Angeles premiere of "Sparkle" at Grauman's Chinese Theatre in Los Angeles. Associated Press

JONATHAN LANDRUM
Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — Bobbi Kristina Brown has commented often about her marriage to Nick Gordon, the orphaned young man she grew up with after Whitney Houston brought him into the family. But her father's lawyer says they never wed. "To correct earlier reports, Bobbi Kristina is not and has never

been married to Nick Gordon," reads a statement released Tuesday by R&B singer Bobby Brown's attorney, Christopher Brown. Legal authority over Bobbi Kristina's health care and money could become a critical issue for the fractious Houston-Brown family, which has said that Bobbi Kristina "is fighting for her life" after being found face-down in her bathtub on Saturday. Gordon has not spoken publicly since he encountered her unresponsive body. Police said he attempted to revive her while a friend called 911, and that she was alive when rushed to a hospital. Whitney Houston never formally adopted Gordon, but raised the two teenagers together after divorcing Brown. Bobbi Kristina became the sole inheritor of her mother's estate when she died in 2012, and

shortly thereafter, she and Gordon went public with their romantic relationship. Then, on Jan. 9, 2014, Bobbi Kristina posted a photo on Twitter of the couple's hands wearing wedding rings, with the caption "#HappilyMarried. So #InLove. If you didn't get it the first time that is." And as recently as Dec. 25, she was still telling the world that Gordon is her husband: "MerryChristmas!! :)(:Snuggling in a beautiful hotelroom with MY-beautiful husband @nickdgordon :)(:Life couldn't be sweeter at the moment!" Relations between Gordon and some other family members soured last year: He remains subject to a protective order barring him from being within 200 feet (60 meters) of Bobbi Kristina's aunt, Patricia Houston. □



This book cover image released by HarperCollins shows "Charlotte's Web," by E.B. White. Associated Press

HILLEL ITALIE

AP National Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Three E.B. White classics read by millions of parents to their children will soon be available on the digital screen. HarperCollins announced Wednesday that "Charlotte's Web," "Stuart Little" and "The

3 E.B. White classics will soon be available as e-books

Trumpet of the Swan" can be purchased as e-books starting March 17. White's granddaughter Martha White told The Associated Press that family members had worried electronic sales would hurt business for their preferred format, paper. "After discussing this with our agent (Amanda Urban), it's become apparent to us that e-books complement sales of paper books, instead of replacing sales," White said. "The print books of 'Stuart Little' and 'Charlotte's Web' have been selling strongly, and we felt like it was time to allow the books into the market in other formats."

White, whose grandfather died in 1985, said she imagined the e-editions being read by travelers, at airports and train stations, or by people in waiting rooms at doctors' offices. But she hoped that at home families would still use the paper edition. "I think the routines and rituals around reading to children still mean sitting on a bed or in an armchair with an adult, and the print book is the best format for that," she said. The publishing industry has long debated whether e-books expand the overall market or simply shift the market away from paper, for which sales have been

flat at best over the past several years. One area that has seen growth in both categories: young adult/children's books. Results from a 2012 Pew survey closely follow White's ideal for the roles of print and digital: Nearly three-quarters of those surveyed favor e-books while traveling; around 80 percent use paper when reading with a child. Ellie Berger, president of Scholastic Trade, a leading children's book publisher, said the two formats do complement each other and that "the combination of the two are greater than if we had print alone." As the e-book market

has matured, the number of digital holdouts has rapidly declined, with J.D. Salinger's "The Catcher in the Rye" and Gabriel Garcia Marquez's "One Hundred Years of Solitude" among the few notable works still unavailable. White said there are no plans to participate in a new and growing outlet for e-books, subscription services. "It's not something we've been asked about and I don't find myself wanting to go down that road," she said. "The print book is always our primary concern and the bookstores are what we want to support." □

Our Loud, Proud Left



ROSS DOUTHAT
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For the last few weeks, liberal journalists have been furiously debating whether a new political correctness has swept over the American left. The instigator of this argument was New York magazine's Jonathan Chait, normally a scourge of Republicans, whose essay on what he dubbed "the new P.C." critiqued left-wing activists for their zeal to play language cop, shout down arguments and shut down debate outright.

It will surprise absolutely nobody that I think the phenomenon that Chait describes is real. But I come not to judge but to explain - because whether you like or loathe the "P.C." label, the rise of a more assertive cultural left is clearly one of the defining features of the later Obama years. This assertiveness is palpable among younger activists, on campus and online; it's visible in controversy after controversy, from Ferguson to campus rape. And it's interesting to think about exactly where it's coming from. The first source, probably, is disappointment with other forms of left-wing politics. A decade ago, the left's energy was focused on Iraq; in President Obama's first term, it was divided between his quest for a new New Deal and Occupy Wall Street's free-form radicalism. But now the anti-war movement is moribund, Occupy has gone the way of the Yuppies and it's been years since the White House proposed a new tax or spending plan that wasn't DOA.

What's more, despite all the books sold by Thomas Piketty, the paths forward for progressive economic policy are mostly blocked - and not only by a well-entrenched Republican Party, but by liberalism's ongoing inability to raise the taxes required to pay for the welfare state we already have. Since a long, slow, grinding battle over how to pay for those commitments is unlikely to fire anyone's imagination, it's not surprising that cultural causes - race, sex, identity - suddenly seem vastly more appealing.

The second wellspring is a more specific sort of disillusionment. Call it post-post-racialism: a hangover after the heady experience of electing America's first black president; a frustration with the persistence of racial divides, even in an age of elite African-American achievement; and a sense of outrage over particular tragedies (Trayvon Martin, Ferguson) that seem to lay injustice bare.

Post-post-racial sentiment is connected to economic disappointments, because minorities have

faired particularly poorly in the Great Recession's aftermath. And this sentiment's rejection of respectability politics - that is, the idea that the fate of black Americans rests mostly in their own hands - seems to point naturally toward a kind of redistributionism. (Ta-Nehisi Coates' recent Atlantic essay "The Case For Reparations" made this argument explicitly.)

But again, because the paths to economic redistribution are mostly blocked, the more plausible way to put post-post-racialism into practice is social activism: a renewed protest politics of the kind we've seen since Ferguson, and a wider effort to police the culture for hidden forms of racism, which don't require tax increases to root out.

Finally, the late-Obama left is shaped by the success of the same-sex marriage movement, a rare example of a progressive cause that seems to be carrying all before it. To activists, its progress offers a model for winning even when electoral obstacles loom large: It shows that the left can gain ground at the elite level and then watch the results trickle down, that victories on college campuses can presage wider cultural success and that pathologizing critics as bigoted and phobic can be an effective way to finish up debates.

I suspect that a lot of the ambition (or aggression, depending on your point of view) right now from the campus left reflects the experience of watching the same-sex marriage debate play out. Whether on issues, like transgender rights, that extend from gay rights, or on older debates over rape and chauvinism, there's a renewed sense that what happens in relatively cloistered environments can have wide ripples, and that taking firm control of a cultural narrative can matter much more than anything that goes on in Washington.

What's interesting about this ambition is that it's about to intersect with a political campaign in which the champion of liberalism will be a Clinton - when the original Clintonism, in its Sister Souljah-ing, Defense of Marriage Act-signing triangulation on social issues, is a big part of what the new cultural left wants to permanently leave behind.

Precisely because this left's energy is cultural rather than economic, this tension is unlikely to spur the kind of populist, Elizabeth Warrenesque challenge to Hillary that pundits keep expecting.

But it does promise an interesting subtheme for the campaign. Can Hillary, the young feminist turned cautious establishmentarian, harness the energy of the young and restless left? Or will the excesses associated with that energy end up dividing her coalition, as it has divided liberal journalists of late?

Those of us watching from the right - with, perhaps, a little popcorn - will be interested to find out. □



A Future Segregated by Science?



CHARLES M. BLOW
© 2015 New York Times

Let me say up front: I'm not a science guy.

I have always loved science, but I have always loved the arts - drawing, painting and, yes, writing - more.

My deepest foray into science came in high school when I won my way to the international science fair. (Don't get too excited; that sounds more impressive than it was.) It was 1988, and I had produced a project about why the "Star Wars" missile defense system wouldn't work. My project was a beautiful monstrosity made of stained and varnished plywood, with an insert for a diorama of missiles flying, lasers blasting and a midair explosion, and a cutout with space for a small television and a VCR (yes, I'm that old).

I won the district fair - in part, I suspect, because the judges' pool was heavily populated by members of the military - even though I had violated one of the cardinal rules of science fairs: I hadn't actually done an experiment. Mine was a fancy research project - like a 3-D opinion piece. But it didn't matter. The airline lost the whole project when I flew to the international science fair, so I never got to compete.

Although my science dreams were dashed, I still loved science. And I've long been surrounded by science people. My ex-wife was a physics major. My old-

est child is a biology major, and when my twins enter college next year, one wants to major in physics and the other in a scientific field to be determined.

But their interests defy a distressing disparity: Few women and minorities are getting STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) degrees, although STEM jobs are multiplying and pay more than many other careers.

This raises the question: Will our future be highly delineated by who does and who doesn't have a science education (and the resulting higher salary), making for even more entrenched economic inequality by race and gender?

According to the National Math and Science Initiative: "STEM job creation over the next 10 years will outpace non-STEM jobs significantly, growing 17 percent, as compared to 9.8 percent for non-STEM positions."

And yet, the group says, we are not producing enough STEM graduates; other countries are moving ahead of us.

When you look at women and minorities, the situation is even more bleak.

Let's start with high school. Last year, a Georgia Tech researcher analyzed which students took the Advanced Placement exam in computer science in 2013. The researcher, Barbara Ericson, found that in three states no women took it, in eight states no Hispanics did and in 11 states no blacks did. (In Mississippi only one person - not female, black or Hispanic, by the way - took the test that year. Oh, Mississippi.)

Now, on to college, where the disparities remain bleak.

The Associated Press reported in 2011 that "the percentage of African-Americans earning STEM degrees has fallen during the last decade" and that this was very likely a result of "a complex equation of self-doubt, ste-

reotypes, discouragement and economics - and sometimes just wrong perceptions of what math and science are all about."

It continued: "Black people are 12 percent of the United States population and 11 percent of all students beyond high school. In 2009, they received just 7 percent of all STEM bachelor's degrees, 4 percent of master's degrees, and 2 percent of Ph.D.s, according to the National Center for Education Statistics."

It doesn't get better in the workplace. In a 2013 editorial, The New York Times pointed out: "Women make up nearly half the workforce but have just 26 percent of science, technology, engineering or math jobs, according to the Census Bureau. Blacks make up 11 percent of the workforce but just 6 percent of such jobs and Hispanics make up nearly 15 percent of the workforce but hold 7 percent of those positions."

Even when minority students do get STEM degrees, there seems to be a disproportionate barrier to their finding work in those fields.

"Top universities turn out black and Hispanic computer science and computer engineering graduates at twice the rate that leading technology companies hire them," an October analysis by USA Today found.

Furthermore, USA Today reported in December: "In 2014, leading technology companies released data showing they vastly underemploy African-Americans and Hispanics. Those groups make up 5 percent of the companies' workforce, compared to 14 percent nationally."

No matter what strides we make - or don't - in the march toward racial and gender equality in this country, is this an area in which the future will feel more stratified, and in which the inequalities, particularly economic ones, will mount? Is science education a new area of our segregation? □

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Every Year Is the Year of the Dumpling

DAVID TANIS

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Dumplings are said to bring good fortune, and eating them is a time-honored traditional way to celebrate the Chinese New Year, which falls on Feb. 19 this year. So why not rally a few friends for a little home-made dumpling feast? Good dumplings (or won tons) are well within a home cook's reach and, frankly, are often better than what is served at restaurants.

Use store-bought wrappers, then be sure to have a delicious filling. I like a hand-chopped mixture of shrimp and scallops, seasoned simply with ginger, scallions, hot pepper and sesame oil. It takes no time to put together, and can even be prepared a day ahead.

Rope a friend into helping stuff and crimp the wrappers. It's a surprisingly rapid business. I like to cook a



Shrimp and scallop dumplings, dressed with a sauce of spicy sesame oil, rice wine vinegar, and slivered scallions, in New York.

(Karsten Moran/The New York Times)

dozen at a time, enough to give four diners a few dumplings to drizzle with a savory chile-spiked vinegar dressing. The beauty of it all is this: Once the dumplings hit boiling water, you are a mere four minutes away from a bowlful of pleasure. Of course, you'll want more than one bowlful. Not a problem - simply repeat as necessary.

DUMPLINGS WITH SHRIMP & SCALLOP

Time: 1 hour, plus 1 hour for chilling
Yield: 40 dumplings

For the Dumplings:
1/2 pound sea scallops, roughly chopped
1/2 pound shrimp, peeled, cleaned and roughly

chopped
1 teaspoon kosher salt
1/2 teaspoon coarsely ground black pepper
1 tablespoon grated ginger
1/3 cup chopped scallions
1 teaspoon toasted sesame oil
1/2 cup chopped cilantro, leaves and tender stems, plus a few sprigs for garnish
1 serrano chile, finely chopped
40 round dumpling wrappers, 3 1/2-inch diameter

For the Dipping Sauce:
1/2 cup rice vinegar
1 teaspoon spicy sesame oil
2 scallions, thinly slivered
1. Put chopped scallops and shrimp in a bowl. Add salt, pepper, ginger, scallions, sesame oil, chopped cilantro and serrano chile. Mix well with a wooden spoon, then cover and refrigerate at least 1 hour. (Mixture may be prepared up to 1 day ahead.) You

should have about 2 1/2 cups filling.
2. Working in batches, line up dumpling wrappers on a work surface. Place 2 teaspoons filling in the center of each wrapper. Lightly moisten the edge of each wrapper with water and pinch together to surround filling and form a half-moon. Pleat edges to secure the seal.
3. Bring a large low pot of well-salted water to a boil over high heat. Meanwhile, make the dipping sauce: Whisk together rice vinegar, spicy sesame oil and slivered scallions in a small serving dish.
4. Add 12 dumplings at a time to the pot. When they bob to the surface, simmer 4 minutes, then remove with a slotted spoon or spider tool. Serve each person 3 or 4 dumplings in a small bowl. Drizzle with 1 teaspoon dipping sauce and garnish with cilantro sprigs. □